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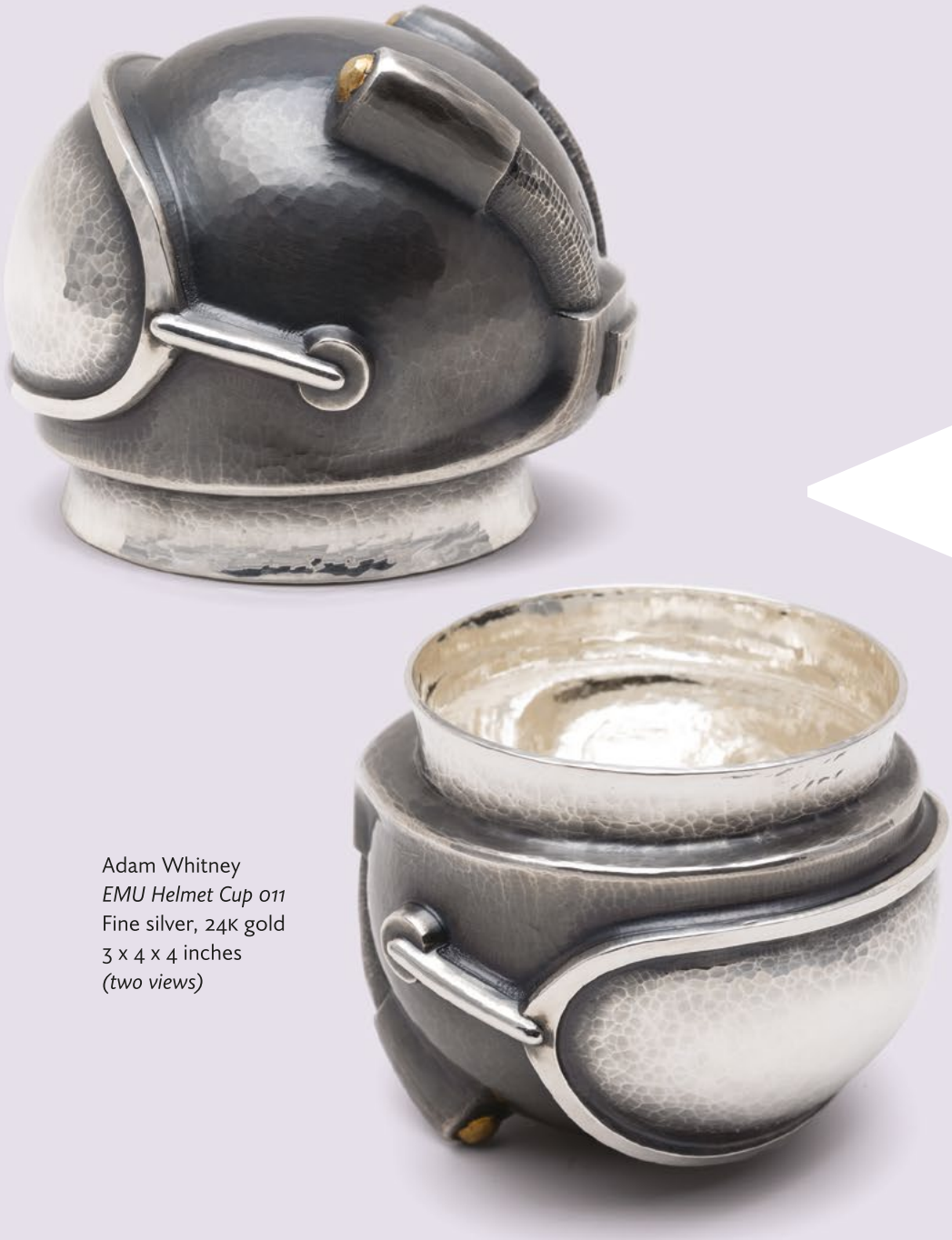

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Adriane Dalton, adalton@snagmetalsmith.org

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Kate Hensler Fogarty

COPY EDITOR Colleen Terrell

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Olivia Shih

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Heather White, Pixel37 Design

SNAG MANAGING DIRECTOR Brienne Rosner

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ON THE COVER David Gaussoin and Wayne Nez Gaussoin: *Postmodern Boa*, 2015. See p69.

In her book, *The White Album*, the late Joan Didion wrote, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." Stories are at the heart of craft. From apprenticeships, to guilds, to the institutional lineages of formalized craft education and beyond, storytelling has been used to pass on expertise, to make sense of the present, and to bear witness to history.

Glenn Adamson reflects upon lineages and knowledge-sharing pathways in part two of his article tracing the influences that shaped late-20th-century American blacksmithing. Metalsmith Stephen Yusko is an obvious heir of those forebears. He has a talent for embedding oblique commentary into his steel forms. There is hope that the strength and longevity of the steel Yusko uses to recognize societal precarities—like the tragedies of America's unbridled gun violence—will last into a future where his messages represent a shameful history rather than a visceral, looming dread of their seemingly inevitable recurrence.

Stories of inter-generational creativity (some familial and some communal) are peppered throughout this issue. Karen Smith profiles designer Patricia Carruth, who brings three generations of jewelry industry knowledge to bear in her bespoke fine jewelry business. Historian and art-jeweler Ana Passos honors four generations of Brazilian women fostering education and community in the country's art-jewelry scene. Acclaimed jewelry artist Connie Tsosie Gaussoin passed her craft and creativity along to her children, all of whom have their own well-established and award-winning jewelry and adornment practices.

Rebecca Schena's article is packed with enthusiasm for democratizing craft knowledge via databases and she presents a variety of approaches to sharing and preserving stories. "Out/Loud" is a new series exploring the aesthetic vocabularies of queerness in jewelry and adornment. Stories of individual humans are literally embedded in the work of Monica Cioppettini, who uses discarded costume jewelry as a painterly medium. And, in "Findings" artists play with characteristics of the human face both to express emotions or to elicit them.

Our crowd-sourced Q&A column features thoughtful and thorough responses from Amy Weiks and Gabriel Craig of Smith Shop. In fact, their responses were so rich with detail that we couldn't fit them all in print. Too delightful to be culled completely, you will find them in full, along with answers to additional questions, on our website. The column's success relies on your curiosity and inquiries. Keep an eye on our Instagram (@snagmetalsmith) to find out who will be featured next. ***—Adriane Dalton, Editor-in-Chief***

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

Anne Wolf
Mokume Gane

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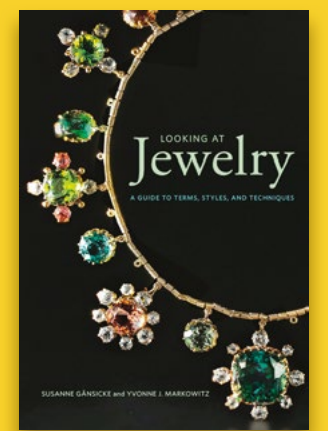

Looking at Jewelry
A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques

Susanne Gänsicke and Yvonne J. Markowitz

The fascination with personal adornment is universal. It is a preoccupation that is primal, instinctive, and uniquely human. With a lively introduction that offers a cultural history of jewelry and its production, this accessible book—the first of its kind—offers concise explanations of key jewelry terms, styles, and techniques.

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Contributors

Photo: John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer and historian based in New York. He has previously been Director of the Museum of Arts and Design; Head of Research at the V&A; and Curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. Adamson's publications include *Thinking Through Craft* (2007); *The Craft Reader* (2010); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (2011); *The Invention of Craft* (2013); *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson); *Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* (2018); and *Objects: USA 2020*. His most recent book, *Craft: An American History,* was published by Bloomsbury in 2021. www.glennadamson.com

Jackie Andrews (@jackiegemcreative) is a writer, editor, and multidisciplinary artist based in rural Maryland. They are the Editor of NYC Jewelry Week's publication platform, *Future Heirloom*, and a new member of the Commence Jewelry team.

RoseMary Diaz is an anthologized poet and award-winning writer based in Santa Fe. She grew up in the Santa Clara Pueblo Indian Reservation, adjacent to the banks of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, her maternal ancestral homeland. She studied literature and its respective arts at the Institute of American Indian Arts, the Naropa University, and the University of California at Santa Cruz. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including *Beadwork* magazine, *Craftsmanship Quarterly*, *First American Art Magazine* (FAAM), and *Indian Country Today*.

Rebekah Frank is a studio artist and independent writer who enjoys traveling the world in search of interesting experiences to fuel both her art and writing practices.

Bella Neyman is an independent curator and writer based in Brooklyn, New York. She is also the co-founder of New York City Jewelry Week, which takes place annually in November.

Photo: Alexandra Manno

Erin O'Brien is a writer in Broadview Heights, Ohio.

Ana Passos is a Brazilian maker. Her Ph.D. thesis is about the construction of the meaning of jewelry. She was one of the finalists of the 2021 Susan Beech Mid-Career Grant with her project about the pioneers of Brazilian artistic jewelry.

Rebecca Schena is a San Francisco-based jeweler, maker, writer, baker, and aspiring maximalist. She is the studio manager at Julia Turner Studio and a contributor to *Metalsmith*, *Current Obsession* magazine, and *Making Progress: Resources for Social Justice in Craft*. She holds a BFA in jewelry and metalsmithing with a concentration in scientific inquiry from Rhode Island School of Design.

Karen Smith is the founder and executive director of We Wield the Hammer, a metalsmith training program for women and girls of African descent. You can find her on Instagram @wewieldthehammer

Amy Weiks and Gabriel Craig are a Detroit-based artist team. While working predominantly in metal, their holistic practice includes writing, craft advocacy, and educational activities. Their artistic work has been exhibited at venues including the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland, OR, the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, TX, the Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC, and the Metal Museum in Memphis, TN. Their critical writing has appeared in craft publications including *Metalsmith*, *American Craft,* and *Surface Design Journal*. In 2012, Weiks and Craig founded Smith Shop—a nationally acclaimed metalworking studio in Detroit that produces functional and ornamental metalwork ranging from jewelry to architectural ironwork. www.smithshop.com

Transforming the Prototype / Adorned Spaces

Juried Student Exhibition

J Diamond / Forging Our Own Path: New Ornament in the African Diaspora / Adorned Spaces

Hands-on Laser Demo / B&D / Vendor Room

SNAG x Providence

50TH CONFERENCE
PROVIDENCE, RI 6/1-6/4/22

SNAG Impact

SNAG is a membership organization committed to fostering an inclusive community that advances the multi-faceted field of metalsmithing and adornment. SNAG inspires creativity and innovation by creating resources and opportunities to help professionals at all levels in the field achieve success.

Tabitha Ott / Trunk Show

Common Ground / Adorned Spaces

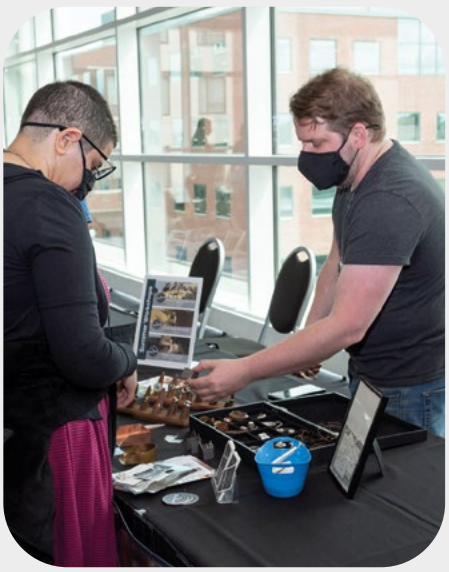
Hope & Creativity were on full display at SNAG's 50th Annual Conference in Providence, Rhode Island.

Providence—a city with a rich history of jewelry and metalsmithing—was the perfect setting for our community to convene and consider our collective future. After two years of virtual engagement amidst the pandemic, a smaller, more intimate scale gathering helped foster a spirit of positivity and camaraderie. In reflections on the event, one attendee noted, "the feeling of inspiration from seeing so many fellow metalsmiths talking about their work and celebrating one another."

Attendees heard from an incredible lineup of presenters who shared a variety of perspectives. Keynote Speaker Michelle Millar Fisher's presentation "Hope and Creativity as Inheritances" shared insight into her curatorial process, and the Curator's Chat with John Stuart Gordon and Ariana Bishop concluded the conference with a riveting conversation on the legacy of jewelry in New England, and the unique opportunities jewelry presents for museum collections. Experts Corkie Bolton, Arthur Hash, and Will Nevins-Alderfer gave advice on a range of topics from marketing to ethical sourcing in Tech Talk, a program we hope to continue virtually this fall.

Aaron McNair / Student Exhibition

Michelle Millar Fisher / Keynote Speaker



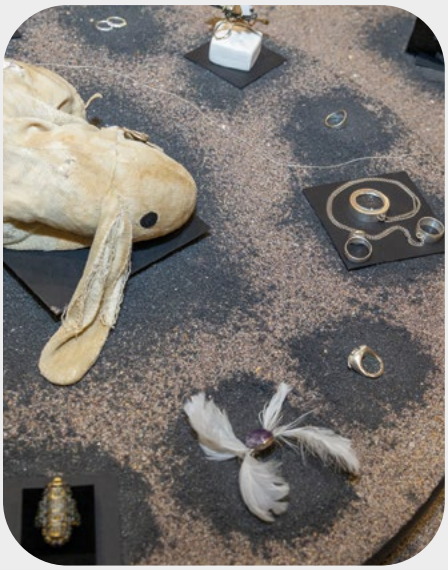
The Bench / Community Resource Room

Ben Cooke-Akaiwa & Emily Pellini / Trunk Show

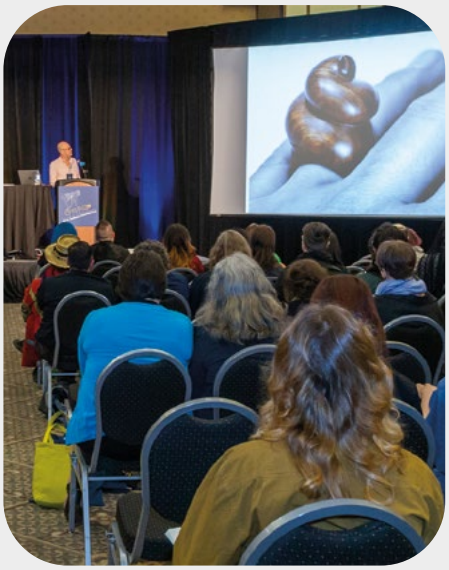
Valerie James / Live Demonstration

Garg Gems / Vendor Room

All conference photos by Cole Rodger



Lambent / Adorned Spaces



Yutaka Minegishi / Rapid Fire Presenter

Conference Volunteers

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Find links to the conference artists, vendors and institutions, digital videos and more on the conference webpages:

- Vendors
- Community Resource Room
- Trunk Show Artists
- Adorned Spaces Exhibitions
- Juried Student Exhibition
- Digital Student Slideshow
- *In Focus:* LGBTQIA+/BIPOC Digital Exhibition
- Narragansett Nation Land Acknowledgement & Resources

Main Stage presentation recordings will be available to Members in September on the website's Video Library.

SCAN ME

snagmetalsmith.org/news-events/conference/

SNAG x Providence featured new voices, new faces, and new approaches to conference programs. A newly established program, *In Focus* is a digital exhibition showcasing BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ makers. Well-loved, long-running programs like Rapid Fire Presentations, Early Career Artists, the Pin Swap, Adorned Spaces, and the Juried Student Exhibition, continued as usual. Meanwhile, Live Demonstrations and the Education Dialogue found a new home as main stage presentations. The former Educational Resource Room was expanded as the Community Resource Room with representatives from academic institutions and community schools, industries, and job opportunities within the industry, such as Tiffany & Co. The Gallery and Studio Visit Night included both exhibitions and artist studios.

SNAG x Providence would not have been possible without all of the planners, sponsors, vendors, presenters, attendees, and especially everyone who volunteered. As a new approach to making attendance more equitable, we offered over full-conference work-exchange scholarships, partial work-exchange scholarships, student scholarships and introduced sliding-scale options. One scholarship/work-exchange recipient stated, "I would not have been able to attend if it weren't for the generous scholarship, and the volunteer work was a great way to feel more involved."

2022 Lifetime Achievement Award

Jamie Bennett

The SNAG Lifetime Achievement Award Committee has selected Jamie Bennett, Professor Emeritus at the State University of New York, New Paltz, as the recipient of the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award. Bennett was presented with the award, newly designed by Youjin Um, at the SNAG x Providence Conference.

Johnathan Wahl, one of the many colleagues who nominated Bennett, wrote, "For over 50 years Bennett's enamel work has pushed the boundaries of the material and the field, it is collected the world over in both private and public collections. As an educator he has shaped the careers of hundreds of jewelers and metalsmiths. He has guided some of his graduate students to become educators themselves with positions in the most prestigious colleges and universities both in the United States and abroad. From his studio practice to his role as a leading educator in the United States Jamie Bennett has proven a lifetime of achievement in the field of Jewelry and Metalsmithing."

Lola Brooks said of Bennett, "A master of enameling, Jamie has been a virtuosic innovator and activist within his chosen medium, upsetting the established traditionalist order of vitreous enamels since very early on in his career. His technical explorations and discoveries have conceptually changed our understanding of fusing glass to metal, what enamel is and could be. His artist practice encompasses painting, drawing as well as jewelry, and he seamlessly navigates all three, allowing for each medium, process, body of work to inform the other, whether conceptually, formally, or procedurally."

Most recently, Bennett was the recipient of the 'Outstanding Educator's Award' (2015-2016), given by the James Renwick Alliance. His work has been featured in exhibitions from Munich to Taiwan and resides in more than thirty important public collections, globally. https://siennapatti.com/project/jamie-bennett/

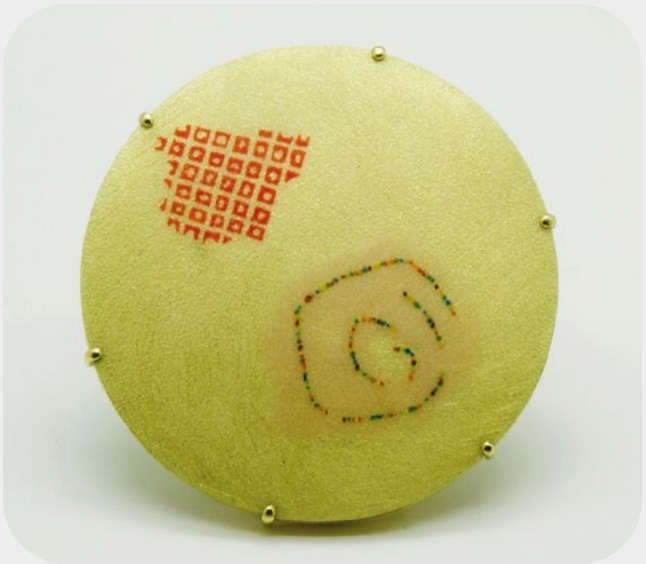
Jamie Bennett with his award

Periphery 9, 2018, enamel, gold, copper, 4 ¼ x 2 ¼ x 3/8 in.

Janus 8, enamel, silver, steel, 4 x 3 x ¾ in.

The 6th Composed Garden, 1999, enamel, gold, copper, 3 x 3 x 3/8 in.

Bennett with Lynn Batchelder, Jeni Mokren, and Myra Mimlitsch-Gray of SUNY New Paltz



In Aerem 3, enamel, gold, 2 ½ x 2 ½ x ½ in.

An image from Bennett's presentation of the artist early in his career

Conference photos by Cole Rodger. Artwork photos courtesy of the artists.

Lifetime Achievement Award Design Winner

SNAG Member **Youjin Um** of Seoul, Korea won SNAG's competition for a new Lifetime Achievement Award design with the piece "Memory of Object," made of sterling silver.

"It can be recognized that the creator's object is not a mere object of conventional meaning, but a meaningful object that originated from the appearance of one's own life and personal experience.

Repeat rearranging and reassembling the memory pieces one by one, scattered through the exposed and abandoned traces.

The process of rediscovering the meaning and value of life in the objectified object that projected something is only possible through the method and reason of constant self-censorship."

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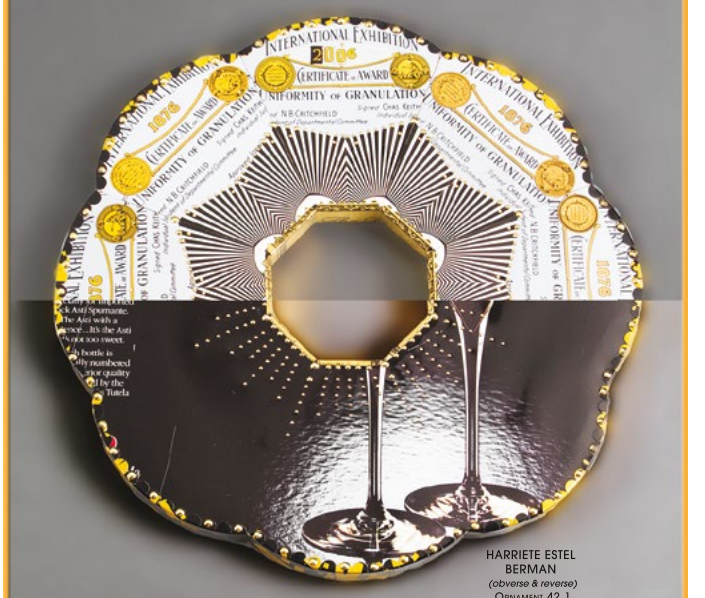

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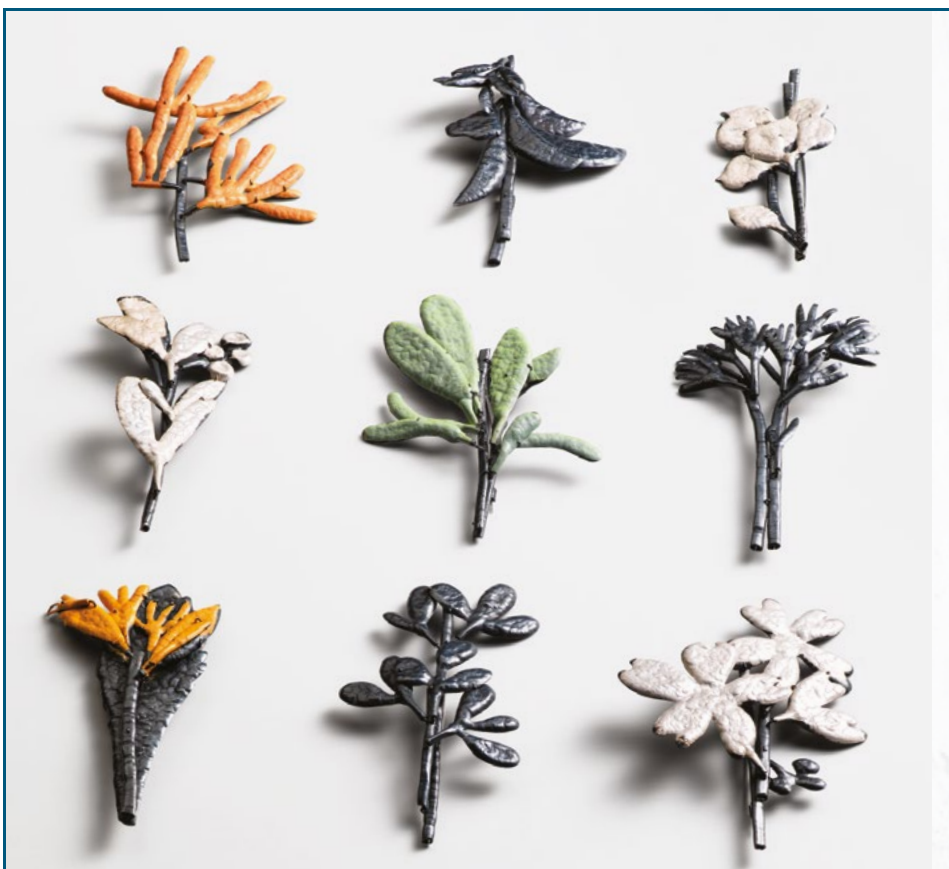

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY BELLA NEYMAN

Julia Walter
Hotlips, 2016 and ongoing
Chromed steel
37 x 20 cm
Photo: Elmer Driessen

"HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID."

It is always nice to walk into a room full of smiling faces. But what if the faces looking back at you are inanimate objects? I recall visiting Schmuck in 2019 and trying on one of Julia Walter's steel line-drawing necklaces at an exhibition and thinking how strange, but also empowering, it felt to wear another person's face on my body. For Walter, who started making these wire pieces in 2015, it felt a bit like a game at first. She says, "I make a lot of line drawings. It makes me happy to find a simple form with a condensed expression. For this specific series the starting point was portraits of people passing by on the street."[1] Certainly jewelry depicting portraiture goes back to antiquity, but Walter's work reminds me of the Surrealists. Salvador Dali and Jean Cocteau, among others, often used physiognomy in their work. For them it was about metamorphosis, spirituality, and cosmology. This holds true today for artists making jewelry inspired by faces.

Soull Ogun of the brand L'Enchanteur believes in transformation and spiritual reawakening. Her series *Extra Terra Astral Faces* plays on "the idea that extraterrestrial life is actual ancestral beings of ancient and futuristic embodiments of evolved versions of our present selves, as well as memories of ancient knowledge..." Ancestral identity also inspired Kalkidan Hoex when creating *TheNEWtribe* Rings. Hoex, who was born in Ethiopia and raised by her adoptive family in the Netherlands, describes the rings as "a heterotopic representation of how I found myself living in between two worlds and discovered a third world. I became fascinated by creating shields with strange faces that represented the faces of the ancestors in an anomalous way.... This interaction was very powerful and similar to how, in western society, we use emoticons to show reactions and give symbolic meaning."

Alexander Blank
Crooked Smiley, 2021
Gold
Various dimensions
Photo courtesy of the artist

While some honor familial legacies, other jewelers look to emojis and emoticons to create a new visual vocabulary. These forms, widely familiar from regular use in social media, provide a level of comfort when worn. Alexander Blank made his first *Smiley* brooch in 2007 while studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. That early work stemmed from Blank's worry that the iconography of the smiley face was losing its meaning. Blank stated, "I had to do something with the smiley one sees everywhere, in your text messages, advertisements, pop-ups, etc. One kind of gets bombed with it! It somehow lost its symbolism or its iconic value... because it [had] multiple meanings and will always be reborn."

It was this "reborn" version, Blank's *Crooked Smiley* rings, that I saw in 2020, and it captured how I felt at the time. Blank says, "The smiley pieces all share the idea of trying to hold up and smile when things happen to you. The pieces are bashed up, crooked; a lot of coincidence influences the outcome of the pieces." In a way, Blank's work reflects the series of coincidental events that influence our lives.

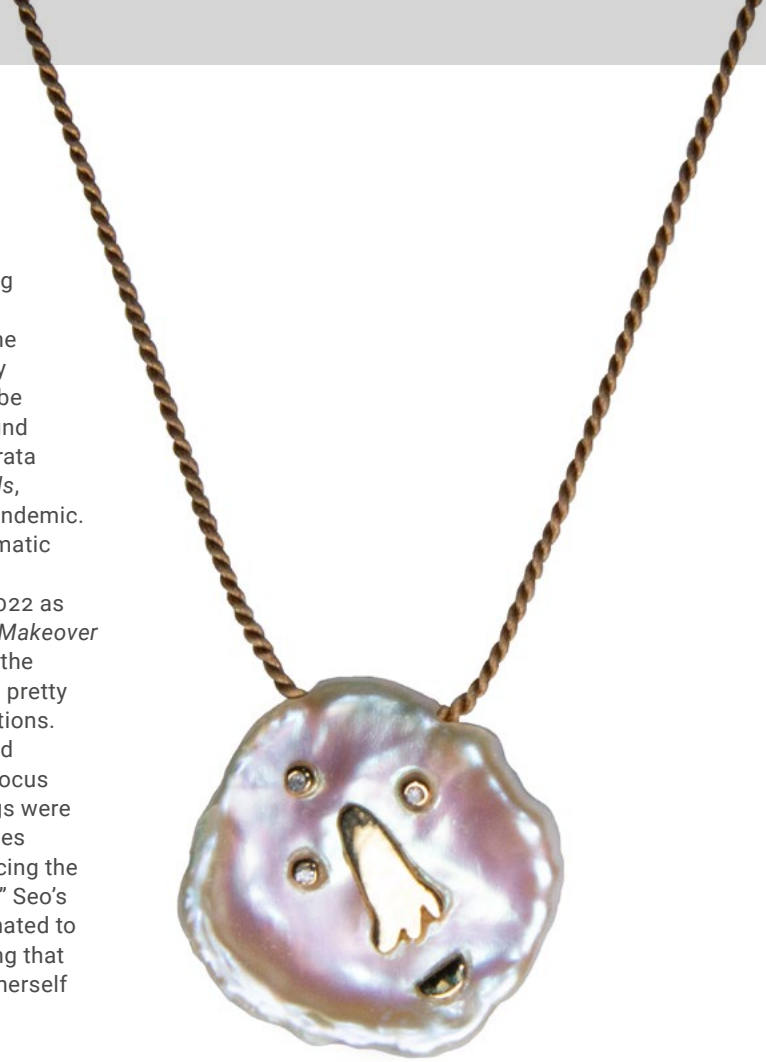
The last two years have given many artists an opportunity to look inwards and create pieces that

L'Enchanteur
Extra Terra Astral Subject 1, 2020
Paraiba opal, green tourmaline, tanzanite, diamond, 14k yellow gold
1¼ x 1 in.
Photo: Commercial Art Lab

Kalkidan Hoex
TheNEWtribe, 2021
Silver, gold-plated silver, 24k gold, sapphires
Photo: Mitchel van Schijndel

not only express our inner self but also bring joy and positivity. Hwayoung Koizumi and Atsushi Koizumi, the duo behind the brand KOMI, created their *Face Signet Ring Series* in early 2020 just as the world was entering lockdown and uncertainty was setting in. "Wearing such big, smiley, positive jewelry was one way to make ourselves happy to some extent. Life is not always a sequence of happy events, but we want to encourage feelings to be positive by wearing this ring." It was also around this time that Julia De Souza of Sanct Desiderata released a small collection called *Pearl Friends*, inspired by the people in her life during the pandemic. She calls it a "happy idea that came from dramatic times."

Jina Seo's *Cry* and *Smile* were created in 2022 as part of Ethical Metalsmiths's *Radical Jewelry Makeover* (RJM) project.[2] "After more than two years of the pandemic," she says, "I realized that I became pretty awkward with expressing or noticing my emotions. Perhaps I am so used to wearing the mask and concealing half of my face. Or I just couldn't focus on my own feelings while all the horrible things were happening in every part of the world. The pieces were my attempt to feel more comfortable facing the human mindset, whether positive or negative." Seo's pieces are created using costume jewelry donated to RJM, thereby breathing new life into something that had been discarded. She said that she found herself



Julia De Souza/Sanct Desiderata
Sabine, 2020
Silk cord, 14k yellow gold, 1 mm natural white diamonds, natural freshwater pearl
20 x 25 mm (pendant); 20 in. cord
Photo courtesy of the artist

Lola Brooks
goodtimecharlie (brooch), 2021
Stainless steel chain, 14k gold solder, vintage coral, vintage blown glass doll eyes, 14k gold, stainless steel
48 x 74 x 27 mm
Photo courtesy of the artist

reacting back to the work—either smiling or making sad faces at it.

For me, the pinnacle of jeweler's fascinations with facial expressions was Lola Brooks's 2021 exhibition at Sienna Patti: *story of the eye: a subculture of ornamental oddities*.[3] Brooks cites the growing popularity of astrology and mysticism and the protective charms that accompany them, stating, "This was no coincidence, but rather a clear response to our daily existence.... Every day we are forced to consider an onslaught of possible realities, never able to fully believe what we see."

Brooks's words and work encapsulate the zeitgeist of not only the current moment in jewelry but also of the broader culture. "There is no doubt that we find ourselves living in strange times. We have become steeped in the illogical, the absurd, the surreal, and therefore these themes will be reflected in contemporary art and fashion. And it is no wonder that as a culture many of us are searching for pathways that may lead us into a new sort of spiritual territory within the maelstrom of today's society. And so, these pieces reflect my state of mind, and the culture as it has unfurled around me, and while I see them as being somewhat dark and disconcerting, they are also ridiculous."

1 All quotes are from email correspondence between the artists and the author during April 2022. / **2** https://www.radicaljewelrymakeover.org. / **3** https://siennapatti.com/project/lola-brooks-2021.

KOMI
Big Smile Signet Rings, 2020–2021
18k yellow gold-plated sterling silver, diamond, black diamond, garnet, orange sapphire, green garnet, ruby
12 x 10 mm (face only)
Photo: Hwayoung Koizumi

Jina Seo
Cry, 2022
Vintage glove leather, copper, found objects
2 x 2½ x ½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Smile, 2022
Vintage glove leather, sterling silver, found objects
2 x 3½ x ½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

OUT/LOUD: QUEER MAXIMALISM

BY JACKIE ANDREWS

The first in a multi-part series, *Out/Loud* investigates the concept of shared visual language in queer communities through the lens of adornment. In keeping with queer experiences, the work of the artists included in this series is multifaceted and varied, exploring queerness, gender, and identity and interpreting adornment broadly. The works are celebratory, exuberant, defiant, and inquisitive—they pose questions about the politics of bodies and how we express ourselves; they disregard rules and examine the privilege, complexity, and danger that comes with visibility; they imagine queer futures.

IN THINKING THROUGH A POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK for exploring *queer aesthetics*, the first identifier that came to mind was "maximalism": the visual representation of "more is more." For many queer artists, myself included, unapologetic explorations of queer identity and maximalist aesthetics seem to have a harmonious relationship—something about all things excessively decorative allows for a celebratory translation of queer identity. The work of Anthony Sonnenberg (he/him) exemplifies queer maximalism in his use of richly embellished surfaces, playful examinations of camp, and defiant reconsideration of gendered objects and motifs.

Sonnenberg has created a rich visual language throughout his work that is distinctively his own. He takes a multidisciplinary and wide-ranging approach across media and bodies of work—from porcelain vessels to assemblage jewelry, performance art to installation. Regardless of medium, Sonnenberg creates abundantly layered works that strike a balance between visual harmony and riotous complexity, engaging the body and capturing the eye at a variety of scales.

In his artist statement, Sonnenberg describes "the act of creating objects of beauty" in his cross-disciplinary practice as an "antidote" to the inevitability of death and the erosion of memory and legacy.[1] This rings true when examining the visual ties connecting his work. Decadent surfaces hint at the concept of material accumulation, growth, and decay over time: rippling porcelain vessels, evocative of delicate florals or icing; carefully curated found objects, antique cameos, stones, and cabochons in jewelry settings; or profusions of flowers or gold-toned vintage materials in immersive environments and costumes.

Flowers are a common reference for Sonnenberg. The orchid, in particular, is a recurrent form in his work and has a direct correlation to explorations of queerness. This is especially noticeable in his jewelry, like *Orchid Cloud Necklace with Rainbows* and his *Silver Cattleya* pieces. Sonnenberg once referred to his pendant *Silver Cattleya with Rainbow* as a "queer beauty amulet."[2] He has returned to that language in his recent work, *Silver Cattleya with Rainbow Jewels (weird queer amulet)*. Considering the longstanding associations of flowers with femininity and sexuality, Sonnenberg brings new depth to existing tropes through the introduction of queer identity. "Orchids, for me, are a symbol of queerness because they have a common perception of being exotic and othered, and on the surface, a very sexual connotation," Sonnenberg said.[3]

Sonnenberg's exploration of orchids and other florals on the body has spanned years and has even translated

Anthony Sonnenberg
Funny Face Cuff, 2021
Brass, copper electroplated leaf, sterling silver, ruby, star sapphire, emerald, pink coral, other precious and semi-precious stones
2 x 3 x 2½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Anthony Sonnenberg
Silver Cattleya with Rainbow Jewels (weird queer amulet), 2022
Sterling silver, semi-precious stones, precious stones.
5 x 6 x 2 in. (pendant only)
Photo courtesy of the artist

Anthony Sonnenberg
Orchid Armor (tell my haters I'm thriving), 2018
Archival inkjet print
30 x 20 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

into use of the plants themselves as material. His sculptural performance work *Orchid Armor (tell my haters I'm thriving)* is a perfect example. Originally inspired by the contestants and their stories on the early days of television shows like *RuPaul's Drag Race*, Sonnenberg's floral armor pieces drew on his interest in the construction of drag personas as both a coping mechanism for trauma and a way of confidently presenting your true self—a duality that Sonnenberg aptly describes as "protection through projection." "That got me thinking about armor that was not really functional in the traditional sense... but was more about shielding you through beauty."

Sonnenberg's wielding of flowers as "armor" highlights the disparity between the decorative and the utilitarian—his antithetical armor denotes softness and delicacy, inciting conversation around the delineations of "feminine" versus "masculine" and their implications. Sonnenberg's interest in the orchid form moves beyond its "exotic" and "sexual" connotations; for him, the flower's characteristic growth patterns present a parallel to the queer experience:

"The other side of the orchid is that it's extremely old and extremely hearty... it can grow without any dirt at all, it can grow on a tree or a rock—it can grow anywhere, and there are thousands of varieties of them all over the world. I thought there was this interesting thing about them: what they look like on the surface is not what they are in actuality—as kind of a symbol of power, but also, that relationship [between beauty and heartiness]."

Other pieces in Sonnenberg's series of floral armor performance works, such as *Mask (#weirdqueer)* and *Golden Camouflage (Ghillie Suit for a Weird Queer),* help bridge the gap between his works on the body and installation pieces, offering visual continuity through his uniquely irreverent material sensibility.

In his site-specific installation works like *You Make Me Feel Mighty Real,* Sonnenberg invokes playful examinations of camp, its relationship to material value, and its ties to class and gender identity. His installations use overwhelming quantities of gold-toned material to evoke a gilded pseudo-opulence fit for a Baroque king: a Midas touch of sorts, which, upon further inspection, primarily comprises foil party decorations, kitsch objects, gold leaf-encrusted faux florals, and domestic objects like candelabras. By wholeheartedly embracing camp, Sonnenberg lends his work an elegant splendor with a healthy dose of irony, repositioning flamboyance as a defiant reclamation. This defiance calls the viewer to re-examine the typically negative associations with camp and kitsch as well as their origins, most notably in the degradation of domestic handcraft and in queer rites of passage like drag.

The powerful reclamations in Sonnenberg's work extend beyond just his material use: in his varied approaches to gender and queerness in relationship to the body, Sonnenberg show us that the objects and environments we surround ourselves with can act as alternative modes—if not extensions of—adornment. As Sonnenberg says, "Sometimes you have to imagine

Right, top:
Anthony Sonnenberg
Mask (#weirdqueer), 2017
Brass, silver solder, copper, steel, paint
12 x 9 x 5½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Right, bottom:
Anthony Sonnenberg
You Make Me Feel Mighty Real
(site-specific installation), 2022
Wood, found objects, recycled art works, video
25 x 15 x 15 ft.
Photo courtesy of the artist

a future to understand the path toward the future, and understand what you actually want; just as the [*Drag Race* contestants] were creating the drag characters to find out who they actually wanted to be, or were in their real life."

Queer maximalism is adornment beyond the body: a projection of a confident true self, a beautiful shield, or even an aspiration for the future.

Anthony Sonnenberg (b. 1986) is represented by Conduit Gallery in Dallas, TX, and also works with Mindy Solomon Gallery in Miami, FL, and Gavlak Gallery in Los Angeles, CA, and Palm Beach, FL. You can learn more about his work on his website, anthonysonnenberg.com, and on Instagram @anthonysonnenberg.

1 "Visual Artist Statement," Anthony Sonnenberg's website, https://www.anthonysonnenberg.com/about-1#/visual-artist-statement. / **2** Reference to the artist's Instagram post, February 2, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/CKzWKbuFobi. / **3** All quotes are from a recorded voice memo from the artist on April 28, 2022, unless otherwise noted.

Portrait of Amy Weiks & Gabriel Craig, 2019

Photo: Nate Johnston

YOU ASKED, THEY ANSWERED
AMY WEIKS AND GABRIEL CRAIG

If you could choose a second career that wasn't in the jewelry and metals field, what would you choose and why?

AMY: Baker (of bread, mostly). There are a lot of variables that can go wrong with just flour, water, yeast, and salt. So achieving a successful bake is very satisfying. Kneading dough is therapeutic. And nothing compares to the deliciousness of fresh baked bread.

GABRIEL: Dog trainer—because... dogs! Trust, nurturing, unconditional love, no judgment. What's not to love?

What is the one tool that you couldn't live without?

GABRIEL: Brass vernier calipers. Didn't I write an article about those for you all? (see *Metalsmith Tech* Vol. 1 No. 1) Also our Nazel Lobdell 3B one-piece power hammer. Honestly, it's not a fair question. We require so many tools to do anything.

AMY: A gas saver for the oxy-acetylene torch. I love small scale forging, forming, and bending with the torch. The gas saver allows you to hang up the torch on a cantilevered hook which closes valves and shuts off the gas flow. When you pick it up the valves open, the gas flows, and you wave the tip by the pilot, and you're off again. There's no need to reset the knobs each time you light it.

Who is your favorite jewelry or metals artist?

GABRIEL: There are so many ways to answer this question. Cornelia Parker. Not a metalsmith strictly speaking, but she understands and exploits the cultural potential of the material as well as anyone.

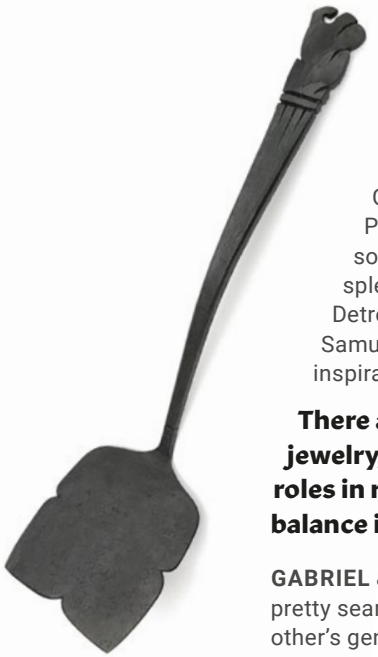
I am always excited to see Instagram updates from blacksmith Lewis Body. There is a lot of bravado in contemporary blacksmithing, as men try to work the largest piece of steel possible. I rarely find large, forged work to be interesting. The form language is Richard Serra, Tom Joyce, or giant chewed up iron booger. It's hard to work at that scale and exhibit nuance and grace. Lewis Body's work is technically and aesthetically innovative, but also serially. His work shows an innate understanding of the material, and he devises novel ways of intervening with it. He is still finding his voice, but the fluency and sophistication of his form language make him someone to watch.

Also Erica Moody. Amazing.

AMY: Two of my longstanding favorite artists are Tone Vigeland and Harry Bertoia. I am attracted to the ease in scale shift between their jewelry and sculpture, and the line quality of their work, as if the pieces have been drawn three dimensionally. There is a richness of texture, a looseness and a quality in the subdued hues and tones of the metal I find simultaneously relaxing and energizing.

Amy Weiks and Gabriel Craig
Bracelet from Kin, 2017
Forged and fabricated bronze
7½ x 3 x 1¼ in.
Photo courtesy of the artists

Smith Shop
Ribbon and Vessel Coasters, 2016–present
Engraved brass
3¼ x 3¼ in. (each)
Photo courtesy of the artists



Smith Shop
Acanthus Spatula, 2019
Forged steel
16 x 3½ x 2 in.
Photo courtesy of the artists

We broadly agree about historic metalwork, too. Late medieval French ironwork, which is heavy on the file and loaded with forge welds, is a favorite. The mid-19th-century Gothic Revival holloware and liturgical designs of A.W.N. Pugin, which were largely executed by John Hardman & Co., are something we strive to emulate in their mastery of ornamental splendor. Art Deco and Art Nouveau ironwork are also inspiring. Detroit is filled with Art Deco architecture and many significant Samuel Yellin works. Edgar Brandt has been a recent source of inspiration.

There are so many facets to Smith Shop—the steelwork, jewelry, commissions, and classes. How do you split up your roles in running this business? How do you manage work/life balance individually but also as a couple/business partners?

GABRIEL & AMY: After working together for 15 years, our collaboration is pretty seamless, if sometimes charged. It is essential that we trust each other's genius, judgment, and talents. Part of our secret to success is that we really do admire each other as professionals and as people.

Our design process is the important foundation of each project. After gathering the parameters and specifications, Gabriel often starts with research and sketching rough ideas and ornamental details. Amy reviews the research and begins a first draft of the design. After reviewing the draft together and a brutal critique of our efforts, we decide on refinements, changes, or sometimes starting over. This continues until we are satisfied with the design. We also work out the project engineering, though we allow the design to evolve—if need be—as it takes shape in metal.

Smith Shop
Gothic Fire Screen, 2021
Forged and fabricated steel
22 x 30 x 4 in.
Photo courtesy of the artists

Amy Weiks and Gabriel Craig
Passkeys, 2019
Forged, filed, and fabricated steel, turned brass
Approx. 4½ x 3 x 1 in. (each)
Photo courtesy of the artists

We share production pretty equally. We are tired of the chauvinist assumption that the man does the blacksmithing and the woman does the jewelry. We can both forge, weld, solder, and file. We both love gold and steel, and creating both large and small works. Because we are equally capable, there is no half-assing it—we hold each other to account. There are fewer bottlenecks because we can jump in to help at any stage or move to a subsequent step to keep things moving. It's also terribly inefficient because no one is a specialist. We both do everything.

Obviously we have different interests, preferences, and talents, but from the beginning we decided that authorship was not an important idea in our work. That's why we created Smith Shop rather than "Weiks Studio" and "Craig Studio." The important thing is that the work is good, not who did what or how much. We have employees who make great contributions to the studio, which we try to honor and recognize. The administrative load is pretty evenly distributed as well.

Finding a work-life balance is perhaps the hardest thing about running a small business and being a craftsperson. For us, making is a lifestyle. We can't just turn it off when we leave the studio. We own a 100-year-old historic home which gets a lot of maker love; we love cooking, baking, and gardening.

We are constantly working at home. We often find ourselves doing administrative work at home, which is not a super healthy work-life balance, especially with two young children competing for our attention.

Smith Shop Studio, 2022

Photo courtesy of the artists

We are not perfect, but our success lies in constantly working to communicate with each other. We ask for what we need and do our best to support and accommodate one another. That might be finding an hour to go for a run or an hour to design or send invoices. We try to take at least two weeks of vacation each year. Sometimes we need to recharge creatively. Attending conferences, doing short residencies, or taking workshops has been great for that. Sometimes recharging emotionally and physically means a trip to the woods for a week.

If you could live and work in another place, where would it be?

GABRIEL & AMY: We would love to live and work in Paris, a city that is dear to us. There are so many things about the city that are appealing. Historically, it is amongst the most important western cities in the innovation and production of jewelry, silver, and ironwork. It has some of the finest museums in the world. The art and architecture are inspiring, the pace of life is reasonable, the weather is mild, the food is good, and the public transportation network is extensive. Generally, we have found that the French engage with a piece and decide if they like it before asking the price. In America, we habitually ask the price first, then form an opinion based not on inherent beauty or functionality, but largely on our relationship with our own wealth. The ability to appreciate artistic production or fine things in general—wine comes to mind here—even if they are unattainable, is a subtle yet distinguishing cultural difference which would make Paris a desirable place to work. Finding a comparable studio space suitable for the type of metalwork we do in Paris that is affordable is obviously next to impossible. One can dream, right?

Amy Weiks and Gabriel Craig
Bracelet from Kin (Acanthus Leaves), 2017
Forged steel, bronze
9¾ x 5 x ½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artists

What is craft activism? What does a craft activist do?

GABRIEL & AMY: At its most basic, craft activism positions actions rather than objects as a vehicle for cultural output and understanding (political, social, environmental, etc.). Craft activism focuses on using the creative act to generate broader cultural connections. Examples include artistic social practice projects (*The Pro Bono Jeweler Series*, 2008-12; *Raising Awareness*, 2013), writing projects (*The Prospects of Slow Gold*, 2011), and direct advocacy work—in particular holding adult and youth classes and workshops at Smith Shop and with partners such as the Center for Craft and Applied Arts and Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation. We believe that craft has a much larger cultural role than that of mere object production. Craft activism, in our conception, seeks to find wider cultural meaning and importance for Craft, and project the discipline as a vital field of contemporary cultural production.

Editor's note: *This interview was abridged for length. Read Amy and Gabriel's full responses along with additional interview questions online at www.snagmetalsmith.org*

Keep an eye on our Instagram @snagmetalsmith for upcoming opportunities to ask questions to a rotating selection of makers, educators, gallerists, curators, small business owners, and more.

PATRICIA CARRUTH: THIRD GEN'S THE CHARM

BY KAREN SMITH

Carruth in her office and design studio, June 2020.

Photo courtesy of AP Photo and Rachelle Welling Photography

PATRICIA CARRUTH IS A TWENTY-NINE-YEAR-OLD, award-winning jewelry designer and the founder and co-owner of Your Personal Jeweler. In 2022, she was the winning designer of *Black in Jewelry Coalition*'s contest "Together by Design: Creating a One-of-A-Kind Ring."

Her passion for creating custom engagement and diamond rings is inspired by her own journey as a fiancée and bride: Carruth discovered the engagement ring her now-husband had purchased for her and secretly posed with the hidden gem. Unfortunately, before he had the opportunity to propose, the ring was stolen. Although the ring was replaced, a bit of the joy of that first ring was stolen too. To this day, Carruth creates a new engagement ring for herself annually, always with different embellishments that mark milestones, family history, or have other personal meaning. Her designs, for both her personal engagement ring and her custom work for clients, are inspired by history, passion, love, and family.

Carruth grew up in Detroit, Michigan, surrounded by jewelry in her grandfather's pawn shop. She is the third generation of her family to make a living in the jewelry industry. Her grandfather, James Floyd, began collecting silver coins in 1955 at age twelve. He learned that people traded, bought, and sold coins, and though he longed to learn more about the business, at the time there weren't very many people in the industry interested in teaching him. Floyd began educating himself about the coin-collecting trade, and in his twenties his interest and expertise expanded to include buying and selling gold. Once he became proficient at appraising gold coins and jewelry, he opened his first pawn shop.

Many people asked him about repairs and custom jewelry, and, recognizing an opportunity to expand, Floyd sent his two sons for formal training in areas where he himself was not proficient. Carruth's father became a certified gemologist at the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) and learned the ins and outs of a jewelry business. Carruth's uncle attended a metals program at Wayne State University and became a bench jeweler.

Carruth, though, took a more circuitous route. She grew up in her grandfather's legacy store, The Gold Mine, and began officially working at the shop in high school. She learned how to identify gold and precious stones and was captivated by the fine jewelry that was presented as collateral for loans, sparking her ongoing fascination with historical and heirloom jewelry. She studied business management in college and worked part-time in a fine jewelry store; her original plan was to open her own business as a wedding and event planner. "The stress of planning my own wedding changed my mind," she says with a laugh.

While working steadily and successfully in sales and management at retail jewelry stores, Carruth became GIA certified, deepening both her knowledge of gems and jewelry and her industry experience. In 2017, she decided to open her own jewelry store. Her grandfather and father had laid a foundation by providing examples of how to run a successful business, but most importantly, how to exist in the jewelry industry.

Carruth wanted to bring her own creative vision to life through innovations in design software and technology. She started out working with Countersketch and found the program an accessible and easy-to-learn entry point for becoming a full-fledged designer. Initially, Carruth's grandfather was concerned; he knew the risks involved in the business and did not want its more difficult aspects—theft, break-ins, and more—to be a part of her story. Her determination, though, secured his support. When she

opened her store, he handed her a 1.5 carat diamond and said, “Loupe it and tell me the color and clarity!” Thrilled when she did, he gave her a bag filled with diamonds in assorted sizes and carats to use in her first collection. Sketching the first piece, a lariat, came easily, and she hired her uncle to fabricate the piece. Later, when looking to employ another bench jeweler, she found a company called The Gold Mine, and their partnership felt like kismet.

Carruth’s greatest joy is designing, but she also has an appreciation and deep love for vintage and historical jewelry that developed while admiring the pieces that came through her grandfather’s shop. Creating heirloom-quality work that can be passed down from generation to generation is one of the reasons she loves creating custom engagement rings. “I want my work to be bequeathed to children and grandchildren,” she says, keenly aware that fewer and fewer things are entrusted to future generations. Carruth’s pieces are sometimes delicate, often elegant, and always feature a special identifier for the wearer. Custom engagement and wedding rings have included, for example, symbols that acknowledged autism or celebrated special mountain ranges.

Carruth’s husband’s *Bahamas* wave ring (2021). White and yellow gold with a mix of white and blue sapphires.

Photo courtesy of AP Photo and Patricia Carruth

Carruth is proud of her legacy as a third-generation jewelry industry professional. Her journey, which included getting married, nursing an infant, and working while studying for the GIA exams, was hectic but ultimately one she calls a great experience that showed her what she could accomplish. She also notes that her grandfather’s ongoing wisdom, knowledge, and support have been invaluable as she navigated opening a retail shop.

For Carruth, the expectation of excellence that comes from being a third-generation jewelry professional in some ways was, and remains, very challenging. She admits she was afraid of growth because she was afraid of falling short and disappointing herself and her family. She tempers her fears by maintaining daily self-care rituals such as meditation practice and a daily vision board for positive reinforcement.

Since opening her business, Carruth has added additional computer-aided design (CAD) to her skillsets and operates a successful appointment-only atelier. As an award-winning business woman who is not yet thirty years old, Carruth certainly has done her family proud. Meanwhile, there are more engagement rings to design, starting with her next anniversary.

Rendered view of *Barcelona* wedding ring (2021). Inspired by architectural designs Carruth saw on her honeymoon in Barcelona.

Photos courtesy of AP Photo and Patricia Carruth

FOUR GENERATIONS OF BRAZILIAN WOMEN JEWELERS

BY ANA PASSOS

WHEN TALKING TO PIONEERS OF BRAZILIAN ARTISTIC JEWELRY, I realized that there was a time when women were not welcome in metal studios and workshops. It was hard for them to buy tools without hearing that tools weren't for women. It was difficult for them to participate in exhibitions and sell their work. The jewelry scene in Brazil has changed dramatically since the 1960s and even more so in the last twenty years. In 2022, women represent the majority in many jewelry spaces and circumstances, like studios, schools, galleries, and exhibitions. That is in great part due to the undeniable effort of four generations of women jewelers who nurtured, inspired, and promoted other women. They are responsible for creating a sense of community as teachers, mentors, curators and researchers. Nowadays, there is a growing awareness about contemporary jewelry among the Brazilian public because of them.

There are still important issues to be addressed: identity, ancestry, and decoloniality, for instance. Recently the efforts in the contemporary jewelry field are concentrated in creating more opportunities to embrace diversity and the representation of all people in such a large country, mirroring the movements of society. The women presented here have been tirelessly leading the way, and we honor their legacy.

Renée Sasson
Untitled (no date)
Slices of rough tourmaline, silver
19 x 12.5 x 1.5 cm (necklace)
3 x 3 x 3 cm (ring)
Photo: José Terra

Renée Sasson was an American-French artist who studied traditional Limoges enamel techniques in France. After moving to Brazil, she fell irrevocably in love with the colors and shapes of Brazilian gemstones, which she began using in her work in 1960. Her antique gallery was a place where she shared knowledge and promoted exhibitions of her contemporaries and newcomers until her death in 2013.

Photo: Ana Passos

Miriam Mamber has been a jewelry artist since 1969. An award-winning artist, her jewelry is appreciated around the world. She has promoted the work of other jewelers at her gallery throughout her career.

www.miriammamber.com.br

Photo: Nellie Solitrenick

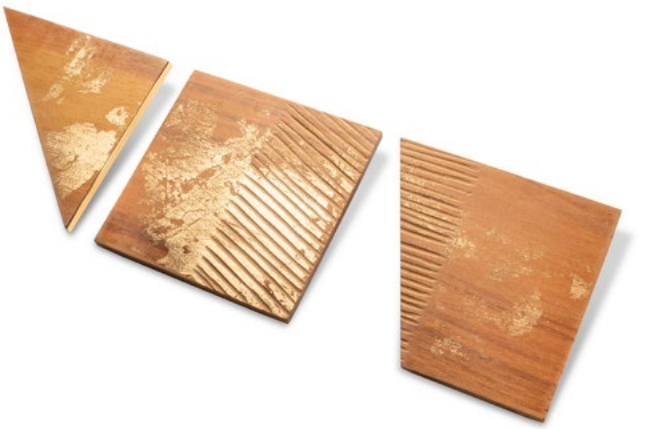
Maria Regina Mazza has been expressing herself through jewelry since 1990. For years, she maintained galleries dedicated to jewelry: Loggia and Ornamentus Contemporaneus. Today, she teaches and organizes exhibitions in her studio, encouraging more people to experiment with jewelry.

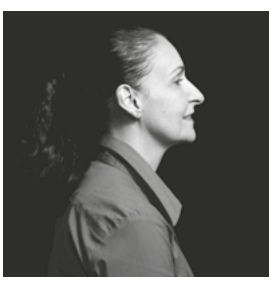
@mariaregina_mazza

Photo: Daniel Mazza Jardim

Top left:
Maria Regina Mazza
Sticks (ring), 2018
Gold, oxidized silver
2 x 3 x 4 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Above:
Miriam Mamber
Mysteries of Earth (necklace), 2000s
Rough and faceted diamonds, gold
3 x 2.5 cm
Photo: Almir Pastore





Lúcia Abdenur has been studying and creating jewelry since 1985. Over the years, her work has become increasingly conceptual as she combines design and goldsmithing techniques, always experimenting with different materials. As a researcher and curator, she and Portuguese artist Cristina Filipe organized the exhibition and publication *Real Jewelry: Portuguese and Brazilian Contemporary Jewelry* (2008).

@luciaabdenur_atelie

Photo: Chico Aragão

Miriam Korolkovas became a jewelry artist in 1969. In 1982, she opened the Escola de Joalheria in São Paulo, where she continuously nurtured new artists. Nowadays, she offers workshops and artist residencies at her studio. She is the most prominent contemporary jewelry curator currently active in Brazil.

www.mmkorolkovas.com.br

Photo: Breno

Lúcia Abdenur
Sea of Light (pin), 2001
Synthetic aquamarine and sapphire, scraping of colored pencil, acrylic, silver
8 x 5 x 1.5 cm
Photo: Miguel Sá

Miriam Mirna Korolkovas
Triptych Brooches, 2000s
From the *Acre Brazil Identity Series*
Reclaimed Peroba wood, gold leaf, gold
6.5 x 6.5 x 1.5 cm (each)
Photo: José Terra

Reny Golcman
Untitled (pendant), 2018
Chalcedony drusy, gold
3 x 4 x 4 cm
Photo: José Terra

Paula Mourão
Hand curves
(hand piece), 2021
Silver
11 x 8 x 4 cm
Photo: J. P. Vellaco

Reny Golcman is one of the pioneers of Brazilian art jewelry. She has been working at her jewelry bench since 1965 and has participated in more than 70 national and international exhibitions. To this day she encourages and supports new talents at her studio.

@renygolcman

Photo: José Terra

Paula Mourão lets her material guide her work at the bench. She doesn't sketch or draw, choosing instead to work directly on metal. Jewelry making has been part of her life since childhood. She is one of the country's most important masters, teaching since the 1980s and following in the footsteps of her father, Caio Mourão, who contributed to the flourishing of art jewelry in Brazil in the 1960s.

www.ateliermourao.com.br

Photo: Luciana Queiroz

Priscilla Vassão
Satellite (harmony ball pendant), 2020
Sterling silver
2.5 x 2.5 x 5.5 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Miriam Andraus Pappalardo
Out of Shape (brooch), 2020
Silver, nylon thread
9.5 x 7 x 8.5 cm
Galeria Alice Floriano Collection
Photo: Arnaldo Pappalardo

Priscilla Vassão is a goldsmith and teacher. Since 1999, she has experimented with material and techniques and immediately shared her knowledge with colleagues. She explains: "What draws me to jewelry making is that it encompasses problem solving, experimentation, creativity, and fire—one that you can make a living with and pass on what you have learned to empower other women to do so as well."

www.priscillavassao.com

Photo by the artist

Miriam Pappalardo started experimenting with jewelry in 2006. She has since become an award-winning maker, educator, and curator, and above all a researcher who explores procedures and materials. She believes in craft and experimental processes as an investigative way to build knowledge. She frequently offers workshops and organizes exhibitions in her studio. She is a member of the contemporary jewelry artists' collective Grupo Broca.

@miriamandrauspappalardo

Photo: Arnaldo Pappalardo

Amanda Chohfi has been a bench jeweler since 1998. Her body of work shows her dedication to detail, with special attention to the micro and macro worlds. She owns a jewelry school and is very attentive to the delicacy and precision of every technique she teaches.

@atelieramandachohfi

Photo: Roberto Stelzer

Renata Porto has been a jewelry artist since 1996. She transforms narratives, reminiscences, and emotions into jewelry. She teaches and organizes exhibitions, promoting Brazilian contemporary jewelry at home and abroad. She is a member of Grupo Broca.

www.renataporto.com

Photo: Danilo Koshimuzu

Amanda Chohfi
Micro-macro/01 (bracelet), 2013
Acrylic, diamonds, rhodium-plated silver
11.5 x 10.5 x 19 mm
Photo: José Terra

Renata Porto
Hand in Hand with My Son (necklace), 2021
Enamel, silver
60 x 7.5 x 6 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Natália Rosa and Camila Fontana began their careers in jewelry in 2011 and 2015, respectively. In 2021 they founded Persefone Lab, as a school, coworking space, and gallery where they help independent jewelers develop and support research in the creative and technical fields. It is a place to share their ideals, materialize dreams, and find beauty in imperfection.

@persefone.lab

Photo: Camila Fontana

Luiza Hermeto has been a designer and jewelry artist since 2013. Her pieces are inspired and guided by Hermetic philosophy. She believes that making jewelry is an eternal, evolving process in which it is possible to achieve self-consciousness and a better understanding of others. This is the reason she and Fernanda Salomão founded Criadouro, a studio, coworking space, and school, in 2018.

@hermeticajoias

Photo: Carolina Juste

Top left:
Natália Rosa
Untitled (pendant), 2019
Wood, peridot, titanium, silver
7 x 2 x 1 cm
Photo: Andrey Garcia

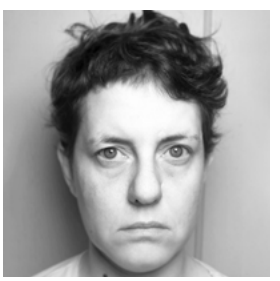
Center:
Camila Fontana
Kundalini (ring), 2019
Titanium, silver
2 x 2 x 3 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Above:
Luiza Hermeto
Pollination (brooch), 2015
Amethyst, sapphire, silver
4 x 2 x 12.5 cm
Photo: Barbara Lissa

Flavia Coelho Cintra has been studying jewelry since 2018. She is inspired by the seashore. Her pieces are tokens of love and strength with layers of processes and stories. They resemble reclaimed pieces from some shipwreck. They are strong. They are survivors. The power of the sea is present, as well as that of the orishas—religious deities—that give their names to countless pieces.

@coquille.rj

Photo: Ana Victoria Cintra



Joana Gabos has been a jewelry artist since 2010. Her background in architecture and urban planning informs her explorations of Brazil's fractured social structure in a powerful body of work.. She has twice won recognition in the Brazilian contemporary jewelry competition FIO, sponsored by Galeria Alice Floriano and Estúdio Escambo (2020 and 2021).

www.joanagabos.com.br

Photo: Ygor Carozzi

Top:
Flavia Coelho Cintra
Olokun and Yemonjá Rings, 2021
Beach sand, pearl, resin, copper nails, copper,
2.5 x 2.5 x 4 and
2.5 x 2.5 x 3 cm
Photo: José Terra

Above:
Joana Gabos
Murdered futures (ring of impossible use), 2021
Concrete, steel, moss
20 x 5 x 15 cm
Galeria Alice Floriano Collection
Photo: Ygor Carozzi

MONICA CIOPPETTINI: ABSTRACTED ACCUMULATIONS

BY REBEKAH FRANK

MONICA CIOPPETTINI IS A PAINTER, though she rarely uses paint to create her work. Instead of paint on canvas, she uses an array of chains, costume jewelry, wrist watches, and other discarded finery to create wall pieces, installations, and art objects. Her fascination with abandoned things, once meaningful but now forgotten, is a vehicle for questioning the meaning of value, addressing the emptiness of consumer culture, and understanding her own impulse for accumulation.

It was during graduate school at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah, Georgia, that Cioppettini began experimenting with objects of adornment as a medium for surface decoration. In the search to find her voice, she realized her collection of objects, abandoned jewelry, purses, watches, and other accessories from her father's long-term storage facility in New Jersey offered an opportunity. After storage units were intentionally or unintentionally abandoned by renters, Cioppettini would comb through a multitude of items, once treasured but now headed

Chain Link (detail above), 2019
Costume jewelry, plaster, gold leaf, chain, resin on panel
Approx. 45 x 34 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

for the landfill. These visually arresting objects, laden with shifting cultural histories and disconnected personal narratives, were both material and concept. She resonated with the need to hold onto things for sentimental reasons and was curious about the owners' decisions to relegate these objects to distant storage facilities. "As long as I can remember, I've been going through other people's things and been surrounded by things that people value. Things they need to store and then can't pay for [the storage]. And it's garbage now. So, it's a cycle of importance versus trash," says Cioppettini.[1]

Her quest for materials moved beyond the initial discoveries in her father's storage facility. Now she collects unwanted material from the inheritances of friends and purchases discarded jewelry from junkmen, thrift stores, even by the pound. Her journey of seeking is part of her process, a way of mining the densely packed, haphazard mazes of junk that humans produce. As she sorts through the piles, she even wears a headlamp, wielding large tweezers in place of a pickaxe.

Cioppettini finds jewelry particularly poignant as a material. She often discovers it amassed in plastic baggies, jumbled and broken, tossed in the bottom of boxes. Perhaps the pieces were no longer in fashion or their associated sentimentality faded with time. In *Embroachment* (2018) and *Chain Link* (2019), Cioppettini uses plaster and resin to attach necklaces, brooches, earrings, hair clips, and more to the traditional rectangular canvas. There is no discernible pattern; instead, the surface is a visual disarrangement, reflecting the state of the pieces when she disinterred them from storage. Swags of tangled chains create movement and extend beyond the frame, while resin touched with gold leaf unifies the gaps between the pieces.

Even when broken and discarded, jewelry retains an incredible intimacy with the body. Sometimes when Cioppettini opens a box, a faint scent of perfume releases, lingering on bracelets and watches. Often, she finds strands of hair caught up in necklaces and hair pins. In the bottoms of the bags and boxes, there are siftings of detritus: a mixture of microscopic skin, dust, and other unknown powders ground down over time. She doesn't clean the pieces before use, instead enshrining these remnants into her work, sealed under a layer of resin.

It's important for Cioppettini that the objects remain recognizable in her process. When the viewer looks at her pieces, they might recognize a brooch like one their grandmother wore, or a watch that they used to wear. These moments of recognition and nostalgia

Big Red, 2019
Costume jewelry, chain necklace, rhinestones, pumice medium on panel
8 x 8 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Far Feathered, 2020
Costume jewelry, wrist watch, faux pearls, faux feathers, pumice medium on panel
8 x 8 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Wristful Thinking, 2019
Costume jewelry, chain necklace, wrist watch, faux pearls, pumice medium on panel
8 x 8 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Right:
Installation views of *ReJeweled* at The SCAD Museum of Art, featuring *Orb* series and *Regalia*.

Images courtesy of the Savannah College of Art and Design

aren't incidental for Cioppettini. When the viewer investigates the surface of her work, seeking the familiar, they are connecting with Cioppettini's own search for and discovery of the pieces.

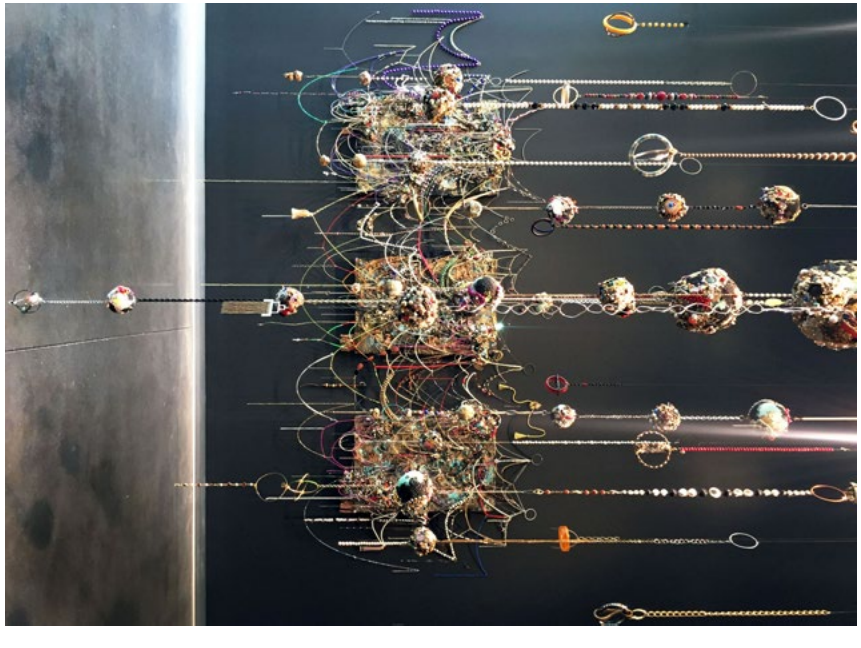
While abstracting her accumulation remains at the root of her process, Cioppettini's smaller works, such as her series of square wall panels, exhibit a symmetry and geometric balance not evident in her larger wall pieces and installations. In *Big Red* (2019), a large circular red brooch guides chains around its curves and then releases them to gravity to hang from the panel. The orderly arrangement of the panels resembles Art Deco patterning, but the slightly worn and dilapidated quality of the objects rejects the machined precision of that period.

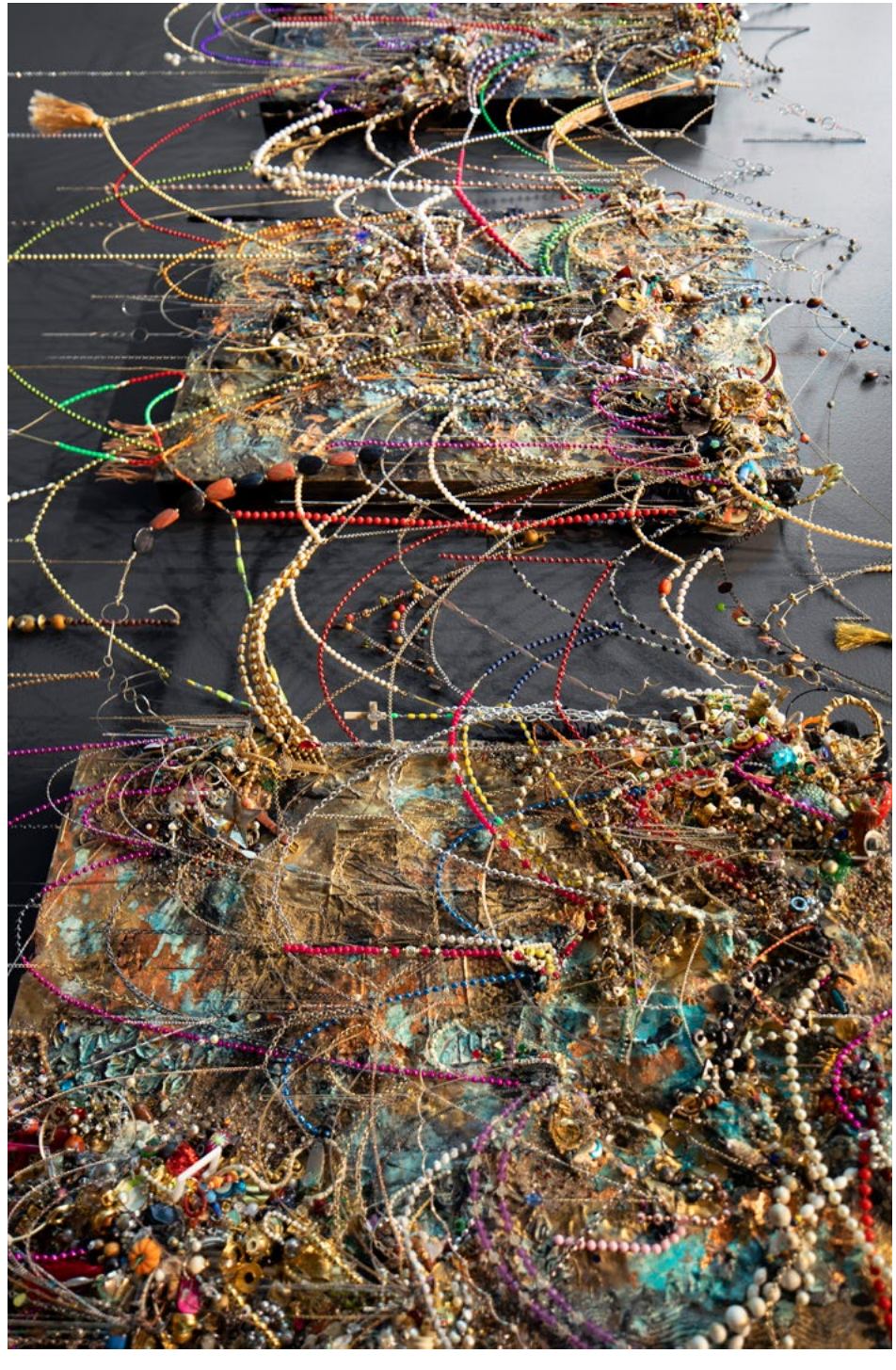
Similarly, in a series of sculptures, Cioppettini uses an evening bag or purse as the starting point. Displayed on the wall and suspended from its own straps, the bag is filled with objects inspired by what the artist found in the bag or that resonate with the bag itself. *Swarm* (2021) contains cicada shells and a segment of beehive alongside costume jewelry. These creepy materials are part of the joy of hunting for treasures in people's cast-off objects, as nature inhabits neglected storage spaces and leaves its own proof of existence amid people's things. In her essay "Finders, Keepers," Jen Shapland notes, "Acquisition is... also driven by desire for a certain kind of intimacy, a relation. Ownership is a relationship with objects and with the person those objects embody in the word's most literal sense."[2]

This material departure expands on Cioppettini's compulsion to accumulate objects that both delight and repulse, underlining the element of the macabre in sorting through someone's deteriorating possessions.

In *ReJeweled*, her 2021 solo show at SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia, Cioppettini's immersive installation expanded along the wall and dangled into the central space. She arranged hundreds of jewelry pieces, creating surfaces that reflect nostalgia and loss. Her *Orb* series consists of small foam globes covered with jewels, barrettes, and other detritus suspended from the ceiling on mismatched and broken chains. Behind *Orb* hung *Regalia*, a three-panel wall piece connected with intersecting webs of chain. There is an element of worldbuilding in Cioppettini's immersive environments, with globes floating in alien landscapes created from human excess. Her work recognizes the death and loss in these abandoned objects, a maximalist *vanitas* of sorts. By reusing the discarded mementos of past lives of strangers, Cioppettini creates a reminder of the temporariness of our own lives and the senselessness of outsized accumulation, even when the objects are impossible to resist.

1 Monica Cioppettini, interview with the author, January 17, 2022. / **2** Jen Shapland, "Finders, Keepers: Objects of My Affection," *Tin House* magazine, 2015, 67-79.





Keepers of the Flame

The American Blacksmithing Revival PART 2

By Glenn Adamson

"Old is not necessarily outdated. New is not necessarily better." So wrote Dona Meilach in her foreword to *Practical Blacksmithing* (1978), a compendium of writings by M. T. Richardson, which had originally been published in the 1890s. It was about to be the 1980s, but Meilach clearly felt that inherited knowledge was still relevant a century later—especially when it came to working iron. This indefatigable chronicler of the crafts had written on disciplines from woodwork to macramé, but was particularly energetic in her coverage of contemporary blacksmithing, eventually writing no fewer than five books on the topic.

There was indeed a gap to be filled. Although few other writers were paying much attention, there was a concerted revival of blacksmithing underway. As described in the previous installment of this article, the first conference of the Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America (ABANA) had been held in 1973, in Lumpkin, Georgia, with twenty-seven attendees.[1] Within a decade, ABANA's membership was two thousand strong. A parallel organization in Britain (BABA, the British Artist Blacksmiths Association) was founded by Richard Quinnell in 1978, and international connections were being forged in many other directions too. Americans, having noticed that their peers in Germany were driving brand-new Mercedes-Benz automobiles, were inspired by the modern movement there, much as glassmakers in the USA looked to Italy. When Meilach visited Japan, she was astonished to find that Kyoto-based artisan Hiroshi Minamizawa, who had recently transitioned from bamboo craft to blacksmithing, had taken the time to translate the entirety of her book *Decorative and Sculptural Ironwork*, writing out the translation by hand.

Robert A. Griffith
Tripod Table, 1996
Copper, patina
23 x 18 x 18 in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of the Artist, 2018.35.1
Photo: Houston Cofield

The year 1980 was a turning point for this burgeoning cosmopolitanism. In that year, a conference and workshop were held in Hereford, England, with smiths from across North America and Europe in attendance. There was also an International Exhibition of Modern Blacksmithing and Sculpture in Lindau, Germany—an important precedent for the better-known touring exhibition *Toward a New Iron Age*, shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum two years later, which included six American smiths. All these events were covered in depth by *The Anvil's Ring*, ABANA's official journal, at the time edited by the highly literate New Hampshire blacksmith Dmitri Gerakaris. A graduate of Dartmouth, Gerakaris brought a wide-ranging curiosity to the magazine, making it into one of American craft's most globally enterprising publications. (Also in 1980, Gerakaris published an account by the German smith Manfred Bredohl of a visit to the village of Yohonou, Togo, where "the klipp-klapp of the hammer blows rung from all the huts." Sculptor Tom Joyce would later visit Yohonou as part of his research for the famed exhibition *Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths*.)

The proceedings of the Hereford conference, as summarized in *The Anvil's Ring*, make for particularly interesting reading.[2] The newly revitalized community of American blacksmiths were, for the first time, being confronted with traditions other than their own. This prompted a series of searching questions—including whether the American "tradition" was even deserving of that name, or if it was just a grab-bag of influences brought by successive generations of immigrants. This was a conversation that had echoes elsewhere in the crafts, like the infamous declaration by

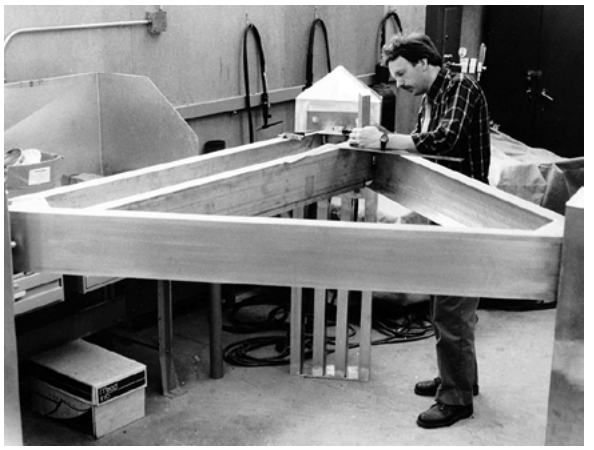
This work [*Eagle Square Gateway*] replaced a historic building fire-damaged beyond repair and serves as the entry to a new city square, punctuating a line of live trees planted into the square.

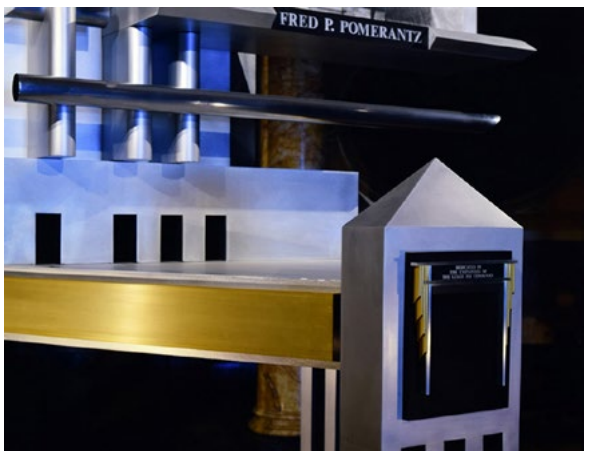
It was innovative in 1983 by the way it seamlessly combined forged steel plate with forged steel bars to achieve architectonic mass and to overcome the linear quality of steel bars commonly produced in 20-foot lengths.

Dimitri Gerakaris
Eagle Square Gateway, 1983
Forged and fabricated, color-galvanized steel across Main Street from the State Capitol in Concord, NH
27 x 40 x 6 ft.
Photo: Sherman G. Howe
© Dimitri Gerakaris

Previous spread:

L. Brent Kington
Icarus, 1987
Steel, paint
18½ x 9 x 31 in.
Metal Museum Master Metalsmiths Collection, Purchase, 2019.3.1a-b
Photo: Houston Cofield





British potter Bernard Leach that North American ceramics lacked a vital "taproot" into the past. In blacksmithing, there were certainly illustrious forebears to point to, such as Philadelphia's Samuel Yellin and Milwaukee's Cyril Colnik—but Yellin had first learned his skills in Ukraine, and Colnik in Austria.

Gerakaris himself, perhaps thinking of the many "keepers of the flame" that had kept the skills and know-how alive in the fallow years of the mid-twentieth century, contended that American smiths did indeed have a valuable legacy behind them—a somewhat paradoxical one, rooted in the "frontier spirit of innovation." New Jersey smith and historian Donald Streeter, who did restoration work for sites such as Independence Hall, concurred, commenting that imported traditions remained little more than "provincial versions of their native forms"; it was the involvement of skilled metalworkers in industrial-scale production that was the USA's real contribution to the discipline. That remained true in the 1980s, with the arrival of new tools like the power hammer and arc welder, "[making] possible forms and transitions undreamed of before. Whether or not there will be a definitive American style, or an international one, remains to be seen."

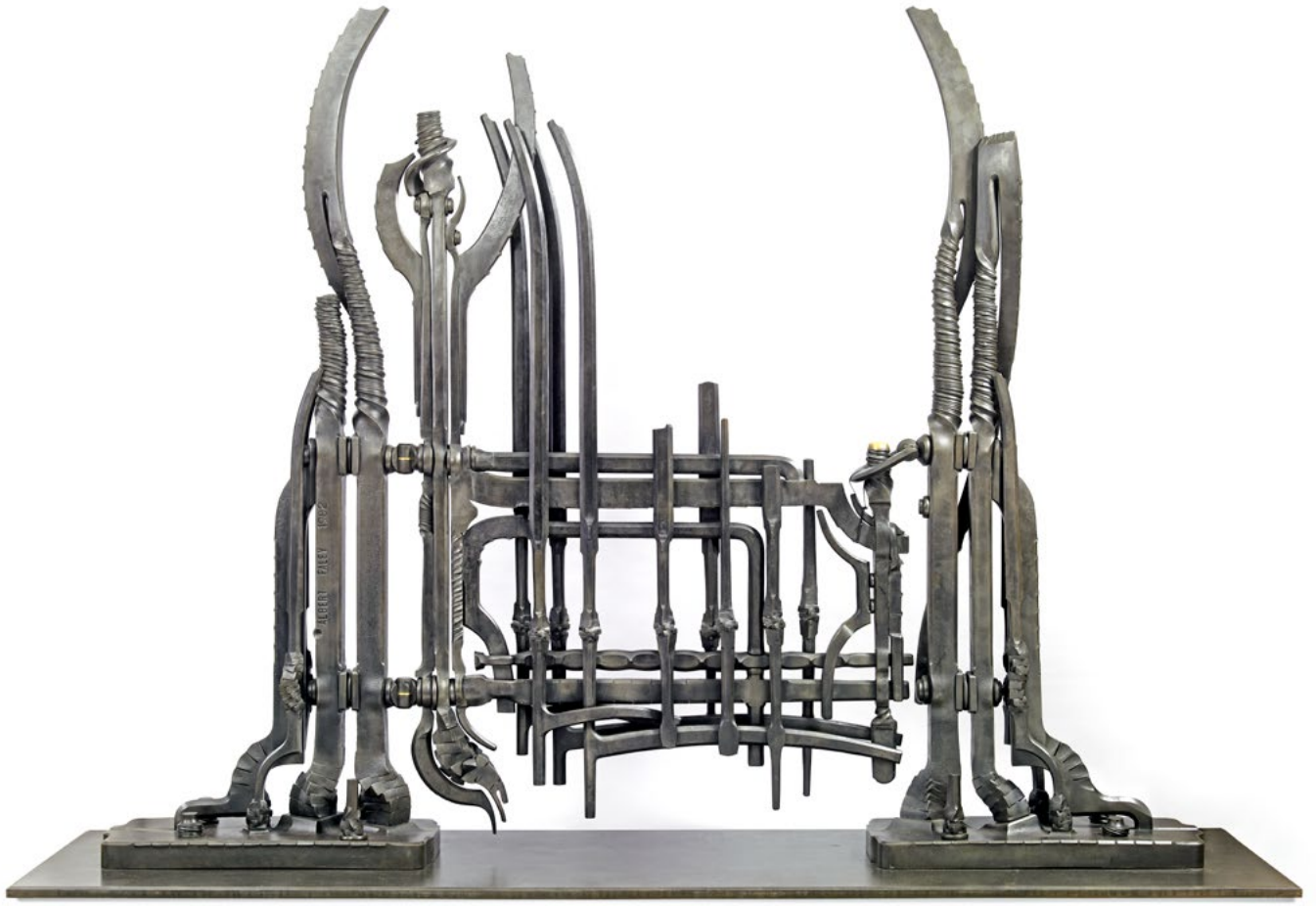
The other principal debate that unfolded at Hereford concerned the relationship between blacksmithing and architecture, an alliance of arts that had provided the most important opportunities for artistic ironwork in the past. That was true of Yellin's career, of course, and also arguably accounted for the strength of the field in Germany, which had an ironic windfall of opportunity in the country's rebuilding after World War II. Alfred Schmidt (whose last name, aptly, means "smith") told *The Anvil's Ring* that he'd developed his skills while managing a crew of no fewer than forty artisans in the reconstruction of Dresden. But there was a question: were the architects of the 1980s going to be interested? In theory, they certainly should have been. As John Dittmeier (then of Delaware, now based in Washington, DC) pointed out, "the International Style is losing its predominance in architecture and design. Young contemporary architects are delving in past styles, manifest in post-modernism and historic eclecticism." This observation was quite astute, given that at the time few postmodern buildings had yet been completed in the USA. Michael Graves's bellwether Portland Building, for example, was still in the final stages of construction. It made sense, though: if architecture was turning to the past, and reclaiming the rich possibilities of ornament that modernism had purposefully set aside, surely a "new iron age" was indeed at hand?

Yet at Hereford, an address by a pre-eminent architect went down like a proverbial lead zeppelin. Theo Crosby, whose stellar resume included the curation of *This is Tomorrow*, the 1956 exhibition that defined British Pop Art, co-founding the radical architecture group Archigram, and teaching at the Royal College of Art (where he would go on to train the likes of David Adjaye), was met with "icy silence" as he presented his audience a slideshow of "Victorian cast iron and welded sheet metal doors from Saudi Arabia." When confronted about his apparent lack of interest in the contemporary blacksmithing scene, which seemed to be shared by other architects, Crosby had a convincing reply: "The only idea with any chance of moving

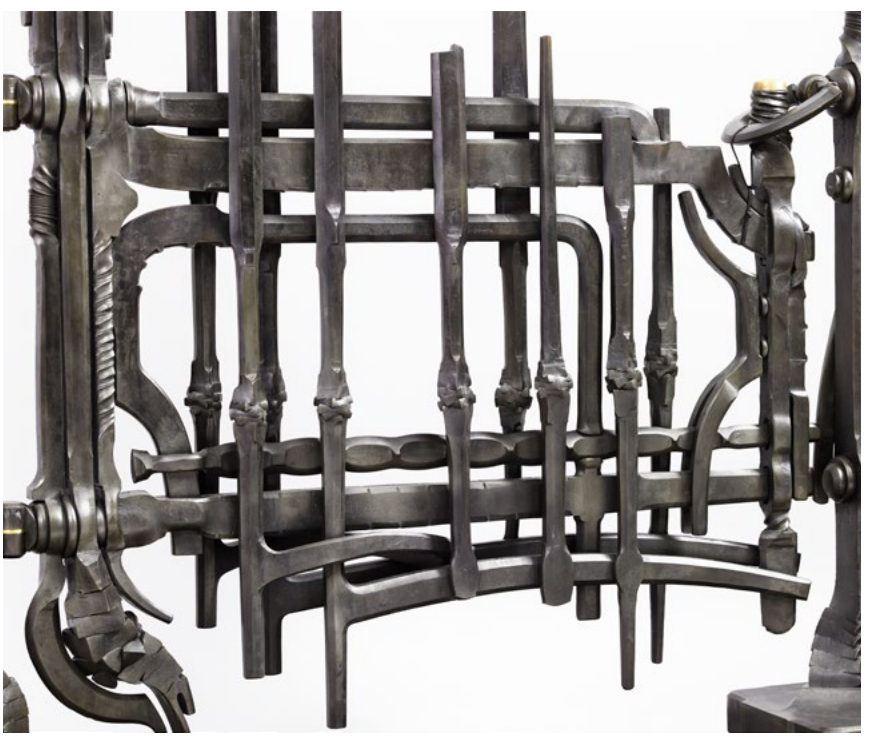
Top:
Robert A. Griffith fabricating the *Pomerantz Memorial*, 1986.

Image courtesy of Robert A. Griffith

Robert A. Griffith
Pomerantz Memorial, Fashion Institute of Technology, 1986
Fabricated and anodized aluminum
Photo engraving
8 x 8 x 12 ft.
Images courtesy of the artist



Albert Paley
Victoria and Albert Gate, 1982
Mild steel, brass details
210 x 271 x 34 cm
© Albert Paley / Victoria and Albert Museum, London



them, since you can't do it with economics, is an artistic one."

That is exactly what American blacksmiths set out to do. A few did become devotees of 1980s postmodern style, among them Robert Griffith, a graduate of the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. But for the most part, the field embraced historicism on its own terms, not so much working at the behest of architects as alongside them, with an emphasis on substance rather than then-fashionable surface effects. The new internationalism of the field paid considerable dividends, here. The pages of *The Anvil's Ring* were rich with the glories of French smithing, for example, from rococo repoussé work to the works of Emile Robert, a leading light of Art Nouveau, to the Art Deco stylings of Edgar Brandt. And these free-flowing precedents were the wellspring for the

Michael Bondi
Stephen Bondi
Tree of Life (with detail), 1983
Alamo, California
Forged mild steel with rusted patina and hand-painted wash details. Main stair stringers forged from ½ x 8 inch steel plates,
13 x 7 x 7 ft.
In the collection of Dell Chase
Photo: Stephen Bondi

best known American smith of the period, Albert Paley. He was pre-eminent in the discipline, much as Dale Chihuly in glass, or Wendell Castle in furniture (and who, like Paley, lived and worked in Rochester, New York). And, like these two other giants of the crafts, he was a postmodernist in spirit, if not style. As *American Craft* magazine described in 1980, Paley rejected the "sterility of modernism in metalwork," adopting Jugendstil's "delicate tendril-like organicism…not in a simplistic revivalism, but in an integration of craft and process, of process and idea."[3] Already in 1974, with his famed portal gates for the Renwick Gallery, Paley had shown what contemporary blacksmithing could offer to architecture. Throughout the succeeding decades, he would indeed go on to win commissions, just as the attendees in Hereford had hoped, for such prominent locations as the St. Louis Zoo, Cleveland Botanic Gardens, and New York State Senate building.

Yet, for all his singular talent, Paley was not unique in his generation; his prominence has to some extent occluded the success of other blacksmiths whose work of the period deserves to be better known. Gerakaris himself is one of these: his 1983 *Tree Gate* in Concord, New Hampshire, is a triumph of naturalistic composition, beautifully integrated into its architectural framework. The previous year, Stephen and Michael Bondi, who had apprenticed with leading Italian smith Simone Benetton, completed an equally impressive work on a similar theme: an astonishing self-supporting spiral staircase in the shape of a "tree of life," festooned with two hundred hand-forged flowers and fifty animals and birds.

The growth of the field can also be measured by the career of Gary Griffin—like Robert Griffith and Albert Paley, a graduate of the program at Tyler. Having heard about the first ABANA conference, he hopped in a car and drove all the way from Philadelphia to Georgia. Over the next few years, in parallel with Paley, he transitioned from his original *métier* of jewelry to focus on large-scale sculpture—though he never really considered himself a full-time blacksmith. "I'm a metalsmith, broadly based, pluralistic," he told me in a 2004 oral history interview for the Archives of American Art. "I machine stuff, I grind stuff, I forge stuff, I cast things, some things are laser cut." His sources are equally eclectic, ranging from Donald Judd to Art Deco metalsmiths who, as he points out, "were ripping off the Egyptians, the Assyrians, Babylon, everything."[4]

Griffin's *Belt Gate* of 1987, in the Metal Museum in Memphis, indicates something of this encompassing curiosity. The hanging belt mentioned in the title calls to mind those used to drive early machines; a zig-zag of lightning (a conventional symbol for electricity) angles down into the heart of the composition; and a battery of five upright pipes anchors the base, like pistons or miniature smokestacks. This iconography, on the left-hand side of the composition, is juxtaposed to a standing screen of reedlike forms to the right. While essentially abstract, the work can be read as an American allegory, an uneasy balancing act between industry and nature.

It feels appropriate to bring this brief survey to its conclusion with L. Brent Kington, discussed in the first half of this article as one of the progenitors of the blacksmithing revival. He was still going strong in the 1980s, both as a maker and a mentor; the metalwork program he'd founded back in 1961 at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, produced many of the field's leading lights. Every bit as steeped in Americana as Paley was in Art Nouveau, his work became increasingly abstract in the latter half of his career,

often calling to mind the work of Constantin Brancusi, perhaps because (like Brancusi) his sources were primarily vernacular: the weathervanes and elegantly functional tools of the nineteenth century.

Kington's *Icarus* series, perhaps his best-known works of the 1980s, draws part of its inspiration from the pioneering flying-machines of the Wright Brothers. Despite the tragic dimension of the original ancient myth of Icarus—who flew too close to the sun with his wax wings, and plummeted to his doom—Kington intended them as representations of transformative potential: "That is a remarkable quality man has," he said in his own oral history interview for the Archives of American Art, "to desire something and, with persistence, bring it to reality."[5] That is just what happens in blacksmithing, of course: every time an artisan fires up the forge, there is the possibility that magic may unfold.

Today, it's hard to believe that blacksmithing in America was ever endangered. In the past decades, the discipline has become much more diverse, especially in regard to gender—as Ana Lopez explained in her important 2013 *Metalsmith* article "Forging On"—and enjoys an ever-broader institutional base.[6] The Metal Museum in Memphis, whose history is closely intertwined with that of ABANA, goes from strength to strength with a blend of historic and contemporary shows, still recognizing the truth of that key 1980s insight: that the present moment is best approached as a thrilling compound of past traditions and future possibilities. This impulse was wonderfully evident in a recent exhibition, *Measured Making: The 150mm Challenge*, which took its impetus from social media, as smiths worldwide responded to a project that originated at the blacksmithing program in—where else?—Hereford, England. The premise was so simple as to be profound: take a small piece of steel, 150 millimeters in length (about six inches) and 20 millimeters square, and make whatever you can. The results, which poured in from across the world, are as gloriously, riotously various as people themselves. It reminds me of something that Dmitri Gerakaris wrote in one of his editorials for *The Anvil's Ring*, about forty years ago: "There appears to be no such thing as the 'average amateur or professional blacksmith'—you are refreshingly all non-homogenized (at least slightly insane) individuals." Maybe it is a little bit mad to try to be a blacksmith in an ever-digitizing world. Fortunately, back in the 1970s and '80s, common sense didn't quite prevail. The world of craft is all the richer for it.

Gary S. Griffin
Belt Gate, 1987
Steel
50 x 36 in.
Metal Museum Master Metalsmiths Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2018.41.1
Photo: Houston Cofield

"There appears to be no such thing as the 'average amateur or professional blacksmith'—you are refreshingly all non-homogenized (at least slightly insane) individuals."

1 Glenn Adamson, "Keepers of the Flame: The American Blacksmithing Revival," *Metalsmith* 41, no. 2 (2021): 40-47. / **2** See *The Anvil's Ring* 8, no. 4 (1980). https://abana.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Anvils-Ring-1980-V8-4.pdf. / **3** Robert Sobieszek, "Albert Paley: Romantic in Metal," *American Craft,* April 1980, 12-17. / **4** Gary Griffin, oral history conducted by Glenn Adamson, Smithsonian Archive of American Art, 2004. https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-gary-griffin-12630. / **5** L. Brent Kington, oral history conducted by Mary Douglas, Smithsonian Archives of American Art, 2001. https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-historyinterview-l-brent-kington-13103. / **6** Ana M. Lopez, "Forging On: America's Women Blacksmiths," *Metalsmith* 33, no. 3 (2013). https://snagmetalsmith.org/issues/metalsmith-vol-33-no-3-2013.

STEPHEN YUSKO

FORGING CONTENT

BY ERIN O'BRIEN

Previous spread:
Transit, 2014
Forged, machined,
and fabricated steel
38 x 58 ½ x 9 in.
Photo: Straight Shooter Photography

ON OCTOBER 8, 2021, STEPHEN YUSKO'S SOLO SHOW, *THE WAY THINGS GO*, OPENED IN the Sculpture Center in Cleveland's University Circle neighborhood. The curated collection included a tiny chapel, one that would fit perfectly in a miniature town situated around a chugging model train. A closer inspection of its exterior, however, reveals a surface that's tortured and scarred, almost as if the souls inside are screaming to escape. The exhibition text reveals that *Collateral Cathedral, Your Huddled Masses* is indeed both physically and ideologically complex; it's constructed in part from "forge-welded firearms."

As the naive image of an idyllic town and toy train fades, it is replaced perhaps by those nine parishioners who will never again worship in Mother Emanuel church in Charleston, South Carolina, or the victims of Sandy Hook Elementary, or Columbine High, or Pulse nightclub, or…. The painful list goes on and on. "The cathedral could stand for any institution," explained Yusko, "a school, church, a government building."[1]

Parts from more than two dozen decommissioned firearms went into creating *Collateral Cathedral,* extending the metaphor in the most unexpected ways. Yusko forged the central structure using steel from the weapons. A revolver's ejector mechanism serves as the church's rose window, which is adorned with a dot of 18-karat gold. The wheel elevating the platform that offers the structure to the world is formed from the barrels of two revolvers. Lastly, Morse code spells out the sculpture's title along the center of the platform: "*your huddled masses,*" an excerpt from Emma Lazarus's poem *The New Colossus*, which is engraved on a plaque inside the Statue of Liberty.

Such is Stephen Yusko's current work, in which devastating themes float amid notes of whimsy, and forged steel elements are rendered ever so vulnerable.

The concepts were further illustrated in the artist's contributions to *Rust,* a group exhibition held earlier this year at Heights Arts in Cleveland Heights. *Elevate* features a structure reminiscent of a Monopoly game's hotel piece, modest save for the blue and silver leaf stripes on the exterior (one of the artist's go-to finishes and one that recalls the exterior of the Cleveland Museum of Art[2]). A vertical propeller stems from its roof, much like a whirligig on a kid's helicopter hat. But if it spins with enough force, will the little house be carried off? Another tiny house sits atop a pliant seven-foot pole in *Drift* (also

Collateral Cathedral: Your Huddled Masses, 2021
Forge-welded firearms, steel,
18k gold
10½ x 18 x 3 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

part of the Sculpture Center show). Visitors were invited to touch the thin rod, and when they did, the 1½-inch-square steel house responded by tracing a wide and wobbling arc in the gallery air.[3] The playful interaction evoked smiles, but for the imaginary people inside, the experience would have been decidedly different.

Deceptively simple, the surfaces of the heavy rocking bases of *Drift* and its companion piece, *Drift: 4-Way* (exhibited at Heights Arts), recall an undulating ocean far from shore. The language of the sculptures extends to the tiniest details. Yusko embellished the fittings where the rods meet the bases with concentric circles to evoke a droplet hitting the water's surface.[4]

Are these toylike objects or representations of our collective vulnerability as we violently sway above a vast ocean of uncertainty? The answer, of course, is the viewer's choice, although the artist might lobby for both.

"I always like the work to look playful,"[5] said Yusko. "It is really important to me that these pieces don't hit you over the head with their content."

During a gallery talk at the Sculpture Center exhibition, Yusko's longtime mentor Don Harvey addressed *Drift*, particularly the tiny fitting at the bottom of the sculpture, as an example of a phenomenon he's dubbed the "Yusko fit."[6]

"Most of us would have drilled a hole in the block and stuck the darn thing in there," said Harvey, "but that's not what happened here. That's an example of the Yusko fit." The concept applies more directly to the artist's myriad vessels, which include boxes, oil cans, teapots, etc., with lids that, per Yusko, have "a nice, kind of a vacuum fit."[7]

Yusko crafted one such vessel ahead of the 2017 presidential inauguration that includes a cryptic message. The miniscule squares and

Drift, 2021
Steel, silver leaf, paint
85 x 5½ x 5½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

rectangles perforating the walls of the intricate box spell out the name of the work, *Resist,* in Morse code,[8] a frequent element in the metalsmith's work.

Other secrets abound in Yusko's sculptures, which appear to float on walls courtesy of carefully hidden and recessed mounts. His mount-making skill is a result of his time at the Saint Louis Art Museum (1999–2006), where he worked primarily as a mount maker for the organization's medieval armor collection. His little houses are secured in their topsy-turvy states with unseen rare earth magnets and stainless-steel pins. The tiny forged blue home in *Rift* (exhibited at both the Sculpture Center and Heights Arts), for instance, hangs suspended from the bottom of a steam-bent white oak element (from stock Yusko crafted during a 2017 Windgate artist-in-residency at San Diego State University). Pluck it from its magnetic clasp and you'll find a stamped steel signature plate, complete with the artist's initials and the year of creation, 2021. When displayed as intended, however, the plate faces the wall, completely hidden. The quest for front-facing perfection extends to function as well. Each of the legs on his gracious accent tables is outfitted with a concealed and threaded leveling mechanism.

"Whatever I make, I approach it as a jeweler," said Yusko during a 2018 studio demo.[9] He then offered examples of his intricate textured steel patterns, which he achieves from forging materials such as threaded pipe, woven wire, and perforated steel. "I want every surface to be considered. I want every aspect of this stuff to be worked over the way a piece of jewelry would."

While he's only dabbled in jewelry[10] (mostly at the beginning of his career, including a stint assisting Mary Ann Scherr in 1989 for a two-week class at the Penland School of Craft), he describes his adherence to a jeweler's practices with a quote from artist Yvonne Escalante, who asserted during the 2018 SNAG conference in Portland, Oregon, "'I am forever a jeweler who does not make jewelry.'"[11]

"I've felt that way most of my career," said Yusko. "But she put those feelings into poetry."

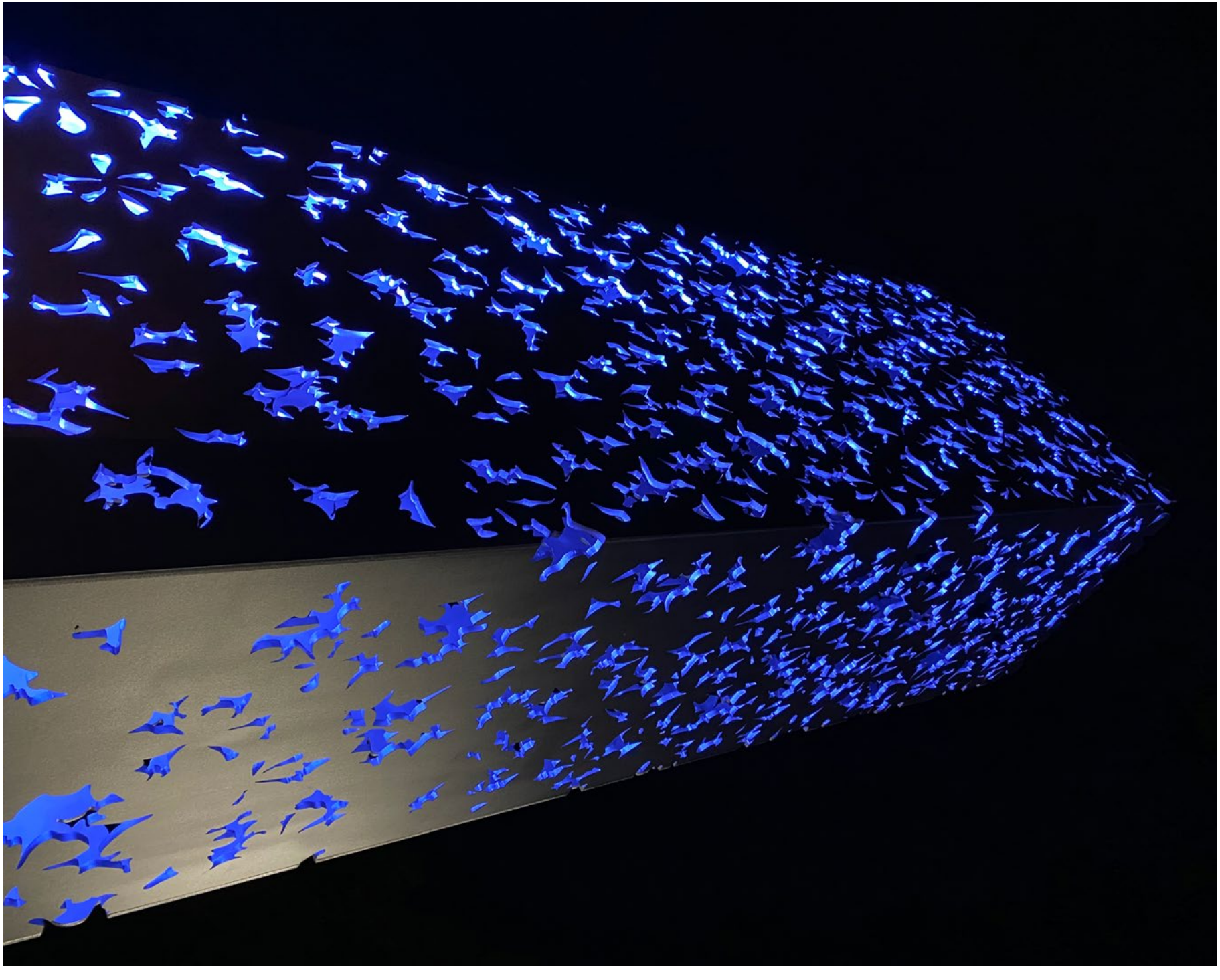
If a Yusko piece looks like it moves, it does. Simple examples include the propeller atop *Elevate,* which is kinetic; and the wheel fashioned from revolver barrels beneath *Collateral Cathedral, Your Huddled Masses,* which has a working axle. The functional component of *Transit,* however, is significantly more complex. The sculpture, nearly five feet long and more than three feet high, immediately recalls a seesaw with a miniature house suspended upside down on one end and a collection of Yusko's row houses on the other. The two elements sit balanced on a curved steel plank on either side of an off-center pivot mechanism. The row houses are nine in number (a recurring digit in the artist's work, which he points out equals the number of players on a baseball team and justices on the Supreme Court[12]), and present as a unit—a sort of three-dimensional comb composed of steel house-shaped teeth. The roof ridges vary ever so slightly, but the precise alignment of the four-pane windows produces a perfect sight line through all nine layers, exemplifying his jeweler's precision, however quietly.

Above:
Rift, 2021
Steam-bent white oak, steel
5 x 36¼ x 2 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Right:
Elevate, 2022
Steel, wood, silver leaf, paint
12¼ x 14¾ x 7 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

I ALWAYS LIKE THE WORK TO LOOK **PLAYFUL**.

IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME THAT THESE PIECES DON'T HIT YOU OVER THE HEAD WITH THEIR CONTENT.



Wendy Park Bridge Gateway Sculptures (collaborative project with Stephen Manka), 2021
Stainless steel, steel, LED lighting, safety glass, paint
Dimensions vary
Photos courtesy of the artist

Above and Right:
Wendy Park Bridge Gateway Sculptures, 2021
Forged flower/pod detail
Steel
16 x 5½ x 5½ in.
Forged bird detail
Steel
3 x 17 x 9 in.
Photos courtesy of the artist

Left:
Nighttime view of the Wendy Park Bridge.

Image courtesy of the artist

Yusko earned his BFA in sculpture from the University of Akron in 1990 (where he met Don Harvey) and his MFA in metalsmithing from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, in 1999. His biography teems with awards, exhibitions, invitationals, and teaching stints at points across the United States and international locales including Wexford, Ireland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.[13] From 1991 to 1996, Yusko was an intern/apprentice and then artist-in-residence at the Metal Museum in Memphis, where his tasks included the production of Etruscan armor components.

"One of the things I made were greaves—leg coverings. If you really start looking at your legs, it's a lot of compound curves. To take a flat sheet of bronze and make it fit this mannequin's leg, it was really hard. It was really cool too,"[14] recalled Yusko in 2021. "Working in this bronze for two months, we sweated green. Our tee shirts were all green. Everything was green."

Other highlights from Yusko's extensive résumé include the invitational traveling exhibition *FORGE,* shown at Ruthin Craft Centre, Denbighshire, Wales (2017), and at the Metal Museum in Memphis (2018), which also held one of his numerous solo exhibitions (*Tributaries: Stephen Yusko,* 2016). Among other programs, he was a Windgate artist-in-residence at Purchase College in Purchase, New York, (2014) and an artist-in-residence at the prestigious Rose Iron Works in Cleveland from 2007 to 2015. From 2008 to 2017, Yusko served on the board of trustees for the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, where he has frequently taught and exhibited.[15] He also chose the surrounding locale of Deer Isle, Maine, to propose to now-wife Ruth Coffey.[16]

"I love being on Deer Isle. It's sort of my second family up there,"[17] said Yusko last fall. The couple subsequently married there in 2011. They currently reside in a century home in Lakewood, a first ring suburb of Cleveland. Yusko's 1,400-square-foot studio is in a historic industrial district adjacent to Cleveland's Asiatown neighborhood.

Tilt, 2021
Steel, wood, silver-leaf, paint
86 x 5 x 11 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

In 2021, a singular opportunity bloomed for Yusko. The Cleveland Metroparks contracted him and fellow artist Stephen Manka to design and build public art for a highly anticipated pedestrian bridge. Adjacent to the Cuyahoga River, the Wendy's Way bridge opened in June 2021 and accommodates a path that was previously all but unnavigable on foot or bike. It connects a lush lakefront park teeming with birds and wildlife to untold points south.[18] Yusko and Manka, who together had also fabricated a set of three graceful lakefront bench swings for the Metroparks in 2017,[19] produced four sculptural pylons for the 500-foot bridge, with two pairs flanking either end of the span.

Each pylon stands more than thirteen feet high. They're constructed from stainless-steel panels that are solid at the base and give way to the team's delicate laser-cut designs; one pair evokes a flock of birds in flight while the other transforms into a patch of flowers and clover.[20] Yusko forged two smaller accent sculptures that are displayed in recessed boxes on two of the towers—a bird in flight inspired by a peregrine falcon and a flower informed by a poppy pod.[21]

The project represents a unique confluence of Yusko's passions: Cleveland's infrastructure (the bridge is situated amid some of the city's most intricate and historic industrial structures), cycling (Yusko, an avid cyclist, took a month off studio work in August 2018 and logged some 1,000 miles on a host of rides around Ohio, Michigan, and even as far as North Carolina[22]), birdwatching (spend any time with the metalsmith and he'll inevitably point out a kestrel or Cooper's hawk—he might even belt out a bird call[23]), and of course his craft of metalwork.

Jim Wallace, former director of the Metal Museum and another of Yusko's mentors, offers an insightful reflection on the artist. "It's important to realize that Steve and I and almost all the people that were working at the museum and the studios there came to the field because of a love of material. We like building things with our hands…. And a lot of what we have to say with a particular piece is expressed in the workmanship and design."[24]

Wallace continued: "For people who are serious in the field, they make that transition from craft to art. A particular piece or object can speak on

Sanctuary: Here to There, 2017
Forged, machined, and fabricated steel, glass, wood, silver leaf
8½ x 3½ x 7¾ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

its own. It's more than a gate. It's more than a table. It's more than a piece of jewelry.

"Steve's that way. He can do beautiful jewelry, a pair of gates… He can do it all; that's because he's not going to settle for anything less than the very best he can do, no matter what. He's remarkable that way."

Wendy's Way bridge is situated on the city's gritty Whiskey Island, home to Cleveland Bulk Terminal, where iconic lake freighters deliver loads of taconite pellets. Mountains of them wait there on water's edge for delivery to the mills upriver, where they'll be transformed into steel.

As Yusko and I walked along Whiskey Island last fall by the new pedestrian bridge,[25] he spied some stray pellets. He stopped and picked up a few of the marble-sized stones, then offered them to me. "Look at these," he said. "They're beautiful."

I WANT EVERY SURFACE TO BE CONSIDERED.

I WANT EVERY ASPECT OF THIS STUFF TO BE WORKED OVER THE WAY A PIECE OF JEWELRY WOULD.

1 Stephen Yusko, telephone interview with author, March 21, 2022. / **2** Ibid. / **3** Stephen Yusko (@StephenYusko Studio), Facebook, October 15, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/487029011349475/videos/401558684776310. / **4** Stephen Yusko, interview with author at The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH, October 15, 2021. / **5** See note 1. / **6** Don Harvey and Stephen Yusko, "Artist Talk in the Galleries: A conversation with Stephen Yusko and Don Harvey," artist talk, The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH, November 13, 2021. / **7** Stephen Yusko, "ThinkCraft Symposium," artist talk, Cleveland Institute of Art, September 21, 2018, Cleveland, OH, video, 48:05, https://vimeo.com/298992878. / **8** Stephen Yusko Studio, Facebook, November 9, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2091973494188344&id=487029011349475. / **9** Stephen Yusko, "ThinkCraft Symposium," artist demonstration, Cleveland Institute of Art, September 21, 2018, Cleveland, OH, video, 54:38, https://vimeo.com/298978141. / **10** See note 1. / **11** Stephen Yusko, correspondence with author, March 22, 2022. / **12** See note 4. / **13** Three of Stephen Yukso's resumes were sourced for biographical information. Resumes were produced in 2016, 2019, and 2022, the last of which was accessed February 9, 2022, http://stephenyusko.com/wordpress/about-2/resume. / **14** See note 6. / **15** See note 13. / **16** See note 6. / **17** Ibid. / **18** Sam Allard, "Wendy Park Bridge, Connecting Near West Side to Whiskey Island, Is Now Open," *Scene*, June 24, 2021, https://www.clevescene.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2021/06/24/wendy-park-bridge-connecting-near-west-side-to-whiskey-island-is-now-open-36151549. / **19** See note 13. / **20** Stephen Yusko and Stephen Manka, interview with author, Manka Studio, Cleveland, OH, June 21, 2021. / **21** Stephen Yusko, Facebook, August 10, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/stephen.yusko.796/posts/1920853611422813. Stephen Yusko Studio, Facebook, July 16, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=4359871584065179&id=487029011349475. / **22** Stephen Yusko, telephone interview with author, January 15, 2022. / **23** Stephen Yusko, interview with author at Wendy Park, Cleveland, OH, November 10, 2021. / **24** Jim Wallace, telephone interview with author, December 20, 2021. / **25** See note 23.

Passing *the* Torch

A Family Tradition of Indigenous Creativity

By RoseMary Diaz

Connie Tsosie Gaussoin
Casino Loot Bag, 2012
Sterling silver, turquoise
6½ x 5 x 4 in.
Photo: Carolyn Wright

When Connie Tsosie Gaussoin was a child, she spent many of her summers visiting relatives on the Navajo reservation.

Traveling with her family from their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the vast and picturesque ancestral homelands of her father, these visits connected the young creative with her artistic heritage. By the time she was a teenager in the early 1960s, she was well versed in the traditional art forms that have sustained her people for centuries and would come to provide the foundation for her life's work.

Descending from two families of highly respected Navajo (Dine') and Picuris Pueblo artists—silversmiths, painters, woodworkers, potters, embroiderers, weavers, and sculptors—Tsosie Gaussoin's early art education was built on observing her family's creative techniques and processes. "Watching my dad work when I was a child... he would always put that last, extra nail into his woodwork, so it would be sturdy and strong... it influenced my mind," says the artist. Tsosie Gaussoin also recalls watching her mother and aunts embroidering on monk's cloth and weaving traditional Navajo rugs, and her uncle, renowned silversmith Tom Tsosie, making tufa-cast jewelry in his hogan using an old-fashioned bellows to melt down Mexican coin silver to cast. "Creativity is in my blood," she says.

Tufa casting is a labor-intensive process used by Navajo and other Native silversmiths of the Southwest since the late 1870s. A soft, porous variety of limestone, tufa stone is abundant on the Navajo reservation where it is mined in large blocks. There was a tufa mine "out behind the hogan," Tsosie Gaussoin recalls, "and [my uncle] would go and gather huge stones off the cliff. He would cut the tufa into molds." Next, two halves of a block of tufa are rubbed together to create a flush surface before a sprue-hole and vent holes are carved into the stone. The artist then carves a design into the flat surface of the inside of the mold, and the halves are clamped together before the molten silver is poured inside. Most tufa molds break after just one or two castings, which truly makes each piece of tufa-cast jewelry unique.[1]

Tsosie Gaussoin channeled her inherent gift and front-row-seat education into a personal artistic vision that gave her the freedom to explore her own ideas while simultaneously holding fast to her place in the intergenerational continuum. "As with our Native languages, it's extremely important to pass on this knowledge, or we will lose our Indigenous ways," says the artist.

Tsosie Gaussoin gained national recognition by pushing beyond the conventional, patriarchal template of Navajo silversmithing with bold forms

Previous spread:
Connie Tsosie Gaussoin
Dragonfly Kiva Seed Bowl, 2005
Sterling silver, gold, Italian coral
6 x 6½ x 6½ in.
Photo: Carolyn Wright

Connie Tsosie Gaussoin,
Afghan Lapis Early Memories, 2000
Sterling silver, Afghanistan lapis lazuli, Italian coral
2 x 1½ x ½ in.
Photo: Carolyn Wright

"The diversity of [the art in] my culture has allowed me to shape my ideas into designs that I continue to build upon, and that my children and grandchildren can build upon to continue our traditions."

and a signature design aesthetic that stood out amongst by-the-book creations.[2] Many accolades followed, but Tsosie Gaussoin's helium-fueled rise to professional success and the flurry of fame that came with it were met less enthusiastically by several of her male contemporaries who questioned the authenticity of her work. "I was approached by some of my male peers who said that my husband made my jewelry," she recollects. "I had to prove that I made it myself so I took classes at IAIA (Institute of American Indian Arts) and Pueblo V Design Institute. I'm glad I faced all those challenges at the beginning—it made me a stronger woman, and a stronger artist." She continues to chip away at the gender-based divisions that have long existed within the art form, noting "now my kids are following in the footsteps of our ancestors."

As one might expect, Tsosie Gaussoin has in turn shared the knowledge that runs through her familial and tribal histories with her four children, who also found their artistic footing within this heritage. "Our ancestors fought for our survival and traditions," says the artist's third-born son Wayne Nez Gaussoin. "It's my responsibility to carry it on, and to be expressive and artistic as an individual. It's embedded in [my] DNA."

David Gaussoin, Tsosie Gaussoin's middle son, also gained a deeper understanding of his cultural roots through artistic expression. "I enjoy knowing that I come from generations of artists and builders," he says. "They created the foundation upon which I can continue to build for future generations." Like his mother, David works as an educator, teaching jewelry design and lecturing on the subject, which gives him the opportunity to actively contribute to generational knowledge-building with new audiences through an Indigenous cultural perspective. Wayne Nez also lectures on the subject of jewelry design.

Col. Jerry E. Gaussoin Jr., an active-duty US Army officer with thirty years of service and the eldest of the Gaussoin children, concurs. "The diversity of [the art in] my culture has allowed me to shape my ideas into designs that I continue to build upon, and that my children and grandchildren can build upon to continue our traditions." *Keeper of Life* and *Ancient Ruins* are just two among Jerry's menagerie of tufa-cast and sheet silver masterpieces.

The youngest member of the family, Tazbah Gaussoin, a Museum Specialist for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, also reflects on the importance of those who walked the artist's path so long ago. "When creating my artwork, I like to think of my ancestors and the materials or the process they used to create their own art, and the similarities between the two," she says. "That could mean using [what is] available to me—right now I live in an apartment and don't have studio space for silversmithing, so in the meantime I've turned my focus to leatherwork." Tazbah's line of elegant leather accessories, which includes earrings and velvety-soft cross-body bags, honors her ancestral tribal connections through the use of traditional materials and design

Above:
Jerry E. Gaussoin Jr.
Ancient Ruins, 2020
Sterling silver, natural kingman turquoise
1½ x 5¾ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Opposite:
Connie Tsosie Gaussoin
Pin,wel Corn Maiden Collar, 2010
Sterling silver, turquoise
½ x 7½ x 10½ in.
Photo: Carolyn Wright

David Gaussoin
Iceberg Collar, 2018
Sterling silver, Japanese fishing weights, shell
3 x 6½ x 10 in.
Photo: Carolyn Wright

"Sometimes it pays to be a rulebreaker. In the end, it's your artwork, your statement, your design; create it so *you're* happy with the final outcome, not to make others happy."

David Gaussoin
Weapon of Mass Collar, 2015
Aluminum
12 x 36 x 36 in.
Photo: Wayne Nez Gaussoin
Model: Tazbah Gaussoin

elements. This also holds true for her weaving, another skill that adds to the young artist's creative versatility.

Throughout the world, the work of Tsosie Gaussoin and the Gaussoin children is synonymous with innovation, originality, and thinking outside the mold, all of which have long been cornerstones of modern and contemporary Native American jewelry-making—think Charles Loloma, Phil Navasya, Sonwai, and Kenneth Begaye, who was known for introducing a new style in the 1940s and '50s that moved away from the supersized jewelry of that era and earned him the title The Father of Modern Navajo Jewelry. But artists who have ventured too far beyond the conservative standards of the art form, whether in design, technique, or materials, have done so at the real risk of being denied admission to the most prestigious of the Indian art markets held annually across the US. This kind of work—north of the cutting edge, ahead of its time, ever-changing—simply defies classification and until fairly recently was long denied its deserved place within the Indian art canon.

Although the Contemporary Indian Art Movement, which materialized in 1962 when the Institute of American Indian Arts was founded in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was instrumental in expanding the definitions and re-surveying the parameters of Indian Art, much of the collector-driven market remained resistant to change and, for the most part, reinterpretations of old ideas were discouraged. Some artists backed away from pursuing experimental forms and techniques, preferring instead to adhere to the formulas that provided reliable livelihoods for so many for so long. For many artists, straying from the path of tradition was a risky option. But for others, such creative confinement was intolerable. "You can't be afraid to push past boundaries and rules," says David. "Sometimes it pays to be a rulebreaker. In the end, it's your artwork, your statement, your design; create it so *you're* happy with the final outcome, not to make others happy." David's *Get Back in Your Box* bracelet, fashioned of found object, copper, sterling silver, and chalk (low-grade) turquoise, articulates the artist's resistance to conformation and confronts the "cultural police" head on. The statement piece is about "not submitting to standards placed upon us to use certain materials just because they are considered 'traditional.'"

Other pieces speak to the infinite imagination of Native design, and to geo-centric and socio-political themes, as seen in David and Wayne Nez's collaboration *Postmodern Boa* (Mother Earth enveloping the wearer) and Tsosie Gaussoin's *Dragonfly Kiva Seed Bowl* (a symbolic representation of creativity hovering above the womb-like enclosure of the sacred kiva) and *Casino Loot Bag* (a commanding reference to the lucrative yet not always brightly lit world of Indian gaming), respectively. These far-out forms and one-of-a-kind creations inject a new

Jerry E. Gaussoin Jr.
Keeper of Life, 2006
Sterling silver, natural Mediterranean coral, freshwater pearl
2 x 2 x 1 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Top:
Wayne Nez Gaussoin
Cosmos, 2022
Sterling silver, found object
1 x 1½ x ½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Right:
Wayne Nez Gaussoin
Non GMO, 2016
Sterling silver, stainless steel, polyurethane cord
2½ x 2½ x 2½ in.
Photo: Mark Herndon

vocabulary in Native design and force us to edit out old descriptives.

When it comes to collaborating, Tsosie Gaussoin and her children agree that open-mindedness and flexibility are among the most important ingredients in the recipe. Jerry values open communication; Tazbah knows the importance of respect and "understanding that it's not a cookie-cutter process."

Working together can also bring challenges, such as negotiating "differences in people's opinions," says Tsosie Gaussoin, and "allowing your final vision to be flexible," as David has learned. "Being able to change or modify your design to encompass others" is also important, adds Jerry, because, as Tazbah notes, "sometimes things change in the process or there's miscommunication. But being open-minded is the key to solving those challenges."

A collaborative project allows each artist to express their individual voice while sharing in a collective idea. "There are times that, when listening to each other's ideas and discussing the collaborative piece, it will grow from another's idea, and that will help mold the piece. So, whether or not you see your individual voice, you know that you were part of the process," says Tazbah.

Though each of the Gaussoin children has taken creative inspiration from many sources over the course of their respective careers, all have, unsurprisingly, found most of it in their own backyard. "My inspirations have come throughout my entire life, beginning with my exposure to the Southwest artists as a youth," reflects Jerry. "Being in the Army has allowed me to travel the world, and has given me the opportunity to be exposed to many other art [forms] and techniques. But the one who has had the most profound influence was my first teacher and mentor: my mom. Without her setting a strong foundation, I would not have accomplished what I have."

David Gaussoin and Wayne Nez Gaussoin
Postmodern Boa, 2015
Copper, enamel, feathers, stainless steel
36 x 42 x 3½ in.
In the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Photo courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico

Wayne Nez Gaussoin
Flor de Nuevo Mexico, 2022
Sterling silver
1½ x 1½ x 1 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

David Gaussoin
Chopper Chic Purse, 2016
Sterling silver, faux crocodile
6 x 7½ x 4½ in.
Photo: Mark Herndon

David counts Michelangelo, the French impressionists, R.C. Gorman, and Alexander McQueen among his muses, but "first and foremost, my mother... who taught me the basics, and encouraged me to find my own path." Wayne Nez acknowledges Tsosie Gaussoin as "our original teacher." Tazbah draws inspiration from her family and their past works, and appreciates that "they are usually the ones to push me beyond my comfort zone."

Tsosie Gaussoin's business was managed by her late husband, Col. Jerry E. Gaussoin Sr. (1941–2019), who "always encouraged me and my children to keep the business part going." "He was our biggest advocate," says Tazbah of her father's encouragement to be innovative and test boundaries.

With each generation of artists something new is called forth—something that simultaneously remains tethered to the past, looks toward the future, and lives in the here and now. For Tsosie Gaussoin and her children, that newness has not eclipsed the old, but continues to orbit around it.

To learn more, please visit http://www.tsosie-gaussoin.com.

"the collaborative piece... will grow from another's idea, and that will help mold the piece. So, whether or not you see your individual voice, you know that you were part of the process."

1 To learn more about tufa casting, please visit https://youtube.com/watch?v=lQJyxUFqwE&feature=share. / **2** Since 1970, Tsosie Gaussoin has been the recipient of numerous awards, including several from both the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) Santa Fe Indian Market and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Arts and Crafts Show; a City of Santa Fe Mayor's Award for Arts Education; a Living Treasure Award and a Collector's Choice Award from the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC); and a Rollin and Mary Ella King Fellowship from the School for Advanced Research, for which her sons David and Wayne Nez were also named Fellows. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Indian Arts (MoCNA), in Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Heard Museum, in Phoenix, Arizona; and the Navajo Nation Museum, in Window Rock, Arizona, and resides within the permanent collections of the School for Advanced Research, the San Diego Museum of Man, the Millicent Rogers Museum, the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, and the University of San Diego. Tsosie Gaussoin's work has been featured in the *Heard Museum Journal*, *Native Peoples* magazine, and *Ornament* magazine.

Tazbah Gaussoin
Leather shoulder bag w/ Pueblo feather design, 2021
Sewn leather, nickel plate rivets
16 x 16 x 3 in. (bag),
15 in. (straps)
Photo: Carl Sutter

Tazbah Gaussoin
Pueblo Feather Earrings, 2021
Leather, stainless steel
2 x ¾ in.
Photo: Carl Sutter

Tazbah Gaussoin
Leather purse, 2021
Sewn leather, nickel plate rivets and D rings
10 x 9 in. (bag),
20–25 in. (straps)
Photo: Carl Sutter

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING IN CRAFT: THE DATABASE AND BEYOND

BY REBECCA SCHENA

Young artists create a collaborative quilt out of paintings, glass tiles, and wood-burnings at a Crafting the Future + YAYA event in New Orleans, January, 2022.

© Crafting the Future
Photo: Corey Pemberton

THERE ARE FEW THINGS I ENJOY MORE than sitting down with a cup of tea and falling down a database rabbit hole. Databases (organized collections of data, usually stored digitally) power much of our built world, from Instagram to museum collections. The invisible hand of "Big Data" is everywhere, but when it comes to choosing a method for exchanging information about craft, the humble, utilitarian database is often passed over for more romantic options.

Although their orderly columns and searchable categories don't exactly have the same allure as learning to forge amidst a craft school's mossy landscape, databases don't have to be boring or overly simplistic. With their ease of use and accessibility, digital databases are a great candidate for organizing the craft community's enormous pool of shared knowledge. And with the proliferation of Internet-based mutual aid, craft databases are undergoing an exciting shift towards a collaborative approach.[1]

DIGITAL DATABASES

My admiration of databases is based in my involvement with Making Progress, an online database of social justice-oriented craft resources that I run alongside artist/educator Leslie Boyd. We developed Making Progress as a resource center for those without access to the published scholarship or visual archives held in paywalled academic databases like JSTOR or the Berg Fashion Library. Visitors can use filters like "subject" or "media" to find the perfect article, organization, project, or craft practitioner to inform their project.

Through this work, I have discovered incredible initiatives transforming the database from a closed, top-down authoritative directory into a more open Wikipedia-style framework. Although these new approaches come with their own challenges, they exchange information more equitably. By including diverse perspectives when consolidating information, we gain a more complete understanding of our field.

The Fashion and Race Database

Founded by Kimberly Jenkins, the Fashion and Race Database (FRD) provides a rich entry point into the work of people of "racialized" identities in fashion. The database originated from a blog-based academic project called *The Fashion and Race Syllabus* and has since evolved into a website divided into six sections, including the "Library" and "Objects that Matter."

Scholars participate in the "Rethinking Fashion Globalization" gathering organized by the RCDF and Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, February 15–16, 2019.

© Research Collective for Decoloniality in Fashion
Photo: Toby Slade

The "Library" is a searchable, annotated catalogue of books, essays, exhibitions, lectures, and films on subjects from "Collegiate Fashion and Activism" to "Aztec Sumptuary Laws," with live media links and full texts when available. In a refreshing acknowledgment of the incessant paywalls that control access to information, the "Library" includes the option to search only open-access resources.

"Objects that Matter" features articles about adornment objects worldwide. Essays dive into each object's history, creation, cultural influence, and subsequent appropriation. Featured objects include the Palestinian *keffiyeh* and Great Plains feathered headdresses.

Given their invaluable contributions to the field, it is unfortunate that, due to emotional burnout and a lack of funds required to provide a "decent or competitive wage/fee" to their contributors, the FRD is on an extended hiatus.[2]

The FRD is one poignant example of a concerning trend I have noticed among similar projects: burnout. Leslie Boyd, my Making Progress collaborator, has seen many colleagues leave similar projects during the pandemic. In some cases, these initiatives were shelved to make time for direct interpersonal activist work. However, others have been dropped due to emotional burnout or a lack of funding: challenges that accompany initiatives that aim to adequately compensate scholarly labor while promoting informational accessibility.

Actipedia

Actipedia has adopted a collaborative, Wikipedia-style approach. The project is a joint effort between the nonprofit Center for Artistic Activism and the absurdist, activist collective the Yes Lab. On its website, Actipedia defines itself as an "open-access, user-generated database of creative activism." Its reportorial summaries of artistic projects that promote social and political change are searchable by issue, creative medium, region, and strategic approach.

Actipedia includes all media, but *Metalsmith* readers may find the "Clothing & Costumes" section most relevant. One recent article covered Senegalese folk-superhero "Plastic Man," who takes on pollution in plastic regalia inspired by the *Kankurang*—a folkloric figure who wears a shroud of woven grasses and teaches communal values.[3]

THE CRAFT COMMUNITY AS A LIVING DATABASE

The initiatives I have discussed so far transform the database from an authoritative directory into a collaborative project. However, databases don't necessarily have to be a searchable, filterable spreadsheet. The craft community *itself* is the oldest database in our field, and how we share knowledge interpersonally is also shifting.[4]

The Fulcrum Project

The Fulcrum Project is a digital residency for artists made vulnerable by oppressive systems, especially artists who have been excluded from higher education or emergency grants. It is a joint project between artists matt lambert and Feather Chiaverini. The first edition of the residency included a stipend and a series of virtual lectures by craft professionals from across the US.

Hosting a residency virtually came with unique challenges: relying on residents to determine the extent of their participation, creating a transparent fundraising and payment structure, and discussing physical media in digital space. However, this format increased flexibility, allowing the residents to learn from professionals beyond their geographic locations.

An artist makes a wood-burning with molten glass at Crafting the Future + YAYA's Better Together pop-up event in New Orleans, January, 2022.

© Crafting the Future
Photo: Corey Pemberton

lambert also noted the importance of preventing burnout in diversity and inclusion work. Their approach, which they credit to Sara Ahmed, is to make room for rest amidst the capitalist pressure to be productive.

Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion

After functioning informally for nearly ten years, the Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion recently transitioned into a Netherlands-based nonprofit. According to their website, the collective functions as an international coalition of fashion scholars engaged in "decolonial" research practices that disrupt the Eurocentric study of fashion and English-language academic circles. The collective has supported dozens of scholars' writing and organized multiple conferences but is currently transitioning away from academia.

This transition has included hosting monthly virtual "conversations" for the past year, focused on topics such as "Appropriation, Reparation, Repair" and "Indigenous Gender Knowledge." Anyone around the world can attend the virtual conversations on Zoom (for a donation of €25 per year) or watch partial recordings on YouTube.

Crafting the Future

Crafting the Future (CTF) aims to bridge arts organizations that support young people of color, like New Orleans-based YAYA Arts Center, with long-established craft schools like Penland, CTF's fiscal sponsor, in order to increase diversity in arts, design, and craft fields. Since its founding in 2019 by Corey Pemberton and Annie Evelyn, CTF has maintained two digital databases: one a directory of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) craftspeople and the other of employment, residency, and grant opportunities for BIPOC makers. Additionally, CTF's Better Together initiative hosts artist markets, technical demonstrations, and workshops. These events encourage knowledge exchange at an interpersonal level by providing space for BIPOC craftspeople to share their expertise.

The Internet age has spawned many new ways to engage in reciprocal learning and combat educational inequalities in craft. Now, we can share resources through online databases like the Fashion and Race Database, Actipedia, or Making Progress; support and promote each other's work through virtual residencies like the Fulcrum Project; and share our expertise through organizations like Crafting the Future and the Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion.

If any of the initiatives mentioned in this article resonate with you, I encourage you to support them by contributing resources, offering your skills, or making financial contributions.

Actipedia: https://actipedia.org

Crafting the Future: https://www.craftingthefuture.org

The Fashion and Race Database: https://fashionandrace.org

The Fulcrum Project: https://www.instagram.com/the_fulcrum_project

Making Progress: https://www.craftandactivism.com

Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion: https://rcdfashion.wordpress.com

1 Kate Holmes, Anita Greenhill, and Rachel McLean, "Creating Communities: The Use of Technology in Craft and DIY Communities of Practice," *Journal of Systems and Information Technology,* 16, no. 4 (2014): 277–95: https://doi.org/10.1108/jsit-05-2013-0018. / **2** Kimberly M. Jenkins, "Instagram Post Related to the Extended Hiatus of the Fashion and Race Database," Instagram, Meta, February 14, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ_4_nbuwSN. / **3** Mady Camara and Ruth Maclean, "This 'Plastic Man' Has a Cape and a Superhero's Mission: Cleaning Up Senegal," *New York Times*, January 20, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/20/world/africa/modou-fall-senegal.html. / **4** Craft Communities, "Literature Review," Arts and Humanities Research Council, University of Exeter, University of Birmingham, and King's College London, completed 2012, accessed January 30, 2022, http://www.craftcommunities.com.

Announcements

Sarah Perkins (b.1953)
Red Cloud Container, 2016
Silver, enamel
6½ x 5 x 5 in.
Crocker Art Museum
Enamel Arts Foundation
Collection
Photo: Bernard N. Jazzar

Grand Opening of Arrowmont Gallery

4.01.2022
Arrowmont Gallery,
Knoxville, TN

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts launched its first permanent off-campus exhibition space. The Arrowmont Gallery will display arts and crafts made by artists in the Arrowmont community—featuring nationally and internationally renowned craftspeople, university faculty, and professional, working artists.

arrowmont.org
@arrowmont_school

Enamel Arts Foundation Donates 938 Enamels to Four Museums

The Enamel Arts Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles, has donated 938 modern and contemporary enamels to four American art museums: Yale University Art Gallery (141 enamels), Philadelphia Museum of Art (132 enamels), Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (458 enamels), and the Crocker Art Museum (207 enamels). The gifts are intended to increase public awareness and appreciation of enamel, a field of contemporary art that the Foundation believes is worthy of greater visibility.

enamelarts.org

Smithsonian American Art Museum Acquires More than 200 Artworks for its Craft Collection

The Renwick Gallery 50th Anniversary Acquisition Campaign, begun in 2020, focused on artworks made by a broadly representative and diverse group of American artists and significantly increases the number of Black, Latinx, Asian American, LGBTQ+, Indigenous, and women artists represented in the nation's collection. More than 130 of these artworks are on display in the exhibition "This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World," which will run until April 2, 2023.

americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/this-present-moment
@americanart

Crowd viewing the exhibition on April 1, 2022, during the Grand Opening event.

Image courtesy of the Arrowmont Archives and Gallery

Announcements, cont.

American Craft Podcast Launches

A new podcast hosted by Sarah Rachel Brown amplifies the voices of artists covered in *American Craft* magazine as well as other innovators in the craft field. Through intimate conversation and storytelling, listeners get an up-close experience of how artists work with materials and develop their designs, how objects come into being, and what it means to live a life in craft.

craftcouncil.org/programs/podcast
@craftcouncil

The Invisible Seam Podcast Launches

Hosted by fashion educator Kimberly Jenkins, this five-part series explores moments in history when Black Americans demanded respect, challenged norms, built community and imagined the future—all through what they wore. From The Fashion and Race Database, Tommy Hilfiger's People's Place Program, and Pineapple Street Studios.

kimberlymjenkins.com
@kimberlymjenkins

Rough Cut Podcast Launches

Hosted by New York City Jewelry Week co-founder JB Jones and photographer Alain Simic, *Rough Cut* is a podcast for jewelers and small business owners that offers honest advice, business insights, trends, special guests, a touch of humor, and unsolicited opinions about the jewelry industry and everyone and everything in it.

nycjewelryweek.com/podcast
@nycjewelryweek

Exhibitions

Motoko Furuhashi
Los Angeles: Fashion District, 2022
Packing tape, road segments, brass, silver, powdercoat paint
7.5 x 7.5 x 3 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Blurring Boundaries: Svena John + Jochen Holz

6.18.2022 – 9.24.2022
Schmagold, Kassel, Germany

Svenja John and Jochen Holz blur the lines between art, design, and craft. This new work creates a new form language that moves dynamically between and defies these categories.

schmagold.com
@schmagold_schmuck

Svenja John
HALIFAX, 2021
Polycarbonate Makrofol, 3-D printed nylon, finely pigmented acrylic paint
7.5 x 15 x 6 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Julia Obermaier (Germany)
Verborgen, 2021
Rock crystal, resin, pigment, stainless steel
85 x 160 x 35 mm
90 x 110 x 35 mm
60 x 80 x 25 mm
45 x 50 x 25 mm
Photo courtesy of the artist

Location Services: Jewelry Perspectives on Time & Place

6.25.2022 – 9.10.2022
The Craft in America Center, Los Angeles, CA

Location Services presents three distinct perspectives on place through the lens of contemporary jewelry and small objects. *Location Services* brings together the work of Motoko Furuhashi, Kerianne Quick, and Demitra Thomloudis and features an on-site collaboration/research space shared between the artists. Viewers will be invited into the process through interactive features of the artists' work.

craftinamerica.org
@craftinamerica

.....

From Artisans to Artists: African American Metal Workers in Memphis

6.26.2022 – 9.11.2022
Metal Museum, Memphis, Tennessee

Through its celebration of artisans and artists from West and Central Africa through to modern-day Memphis, *From Artisans to Artists: African American Metal Workers in Memphis* examines the role of the blacksmith in diverse African contexts and how that artisan identity and associated blacksmithing practices changed in America.

metalmuseum.org/artisans
@metalmuseum

Hawkins Bolden
Untitled, 1986
Wood, metal, furniture.
Courtesy of SHRINE Gallery
Photo: Scott Ogden

LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize 2022 Exhibition

July 2022
Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Seoul, Korea

The LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize seeks to acknowledge and support international artisans who demonstrate an exceptional ability to create objects of superior aesthetic value. The LOEWE FOUNDATION aims to highlight the continuing contribution of craft to the culture of our time. The 2021 winner was announced on June 30 in Seoul, followed by an exhibition of all shortlisted works at the Seoul Museum of Craft Art opening on July 1. [The name of the winner was not available at the press time of this issue.]

craftprize.loewe.com
@loewefoundation

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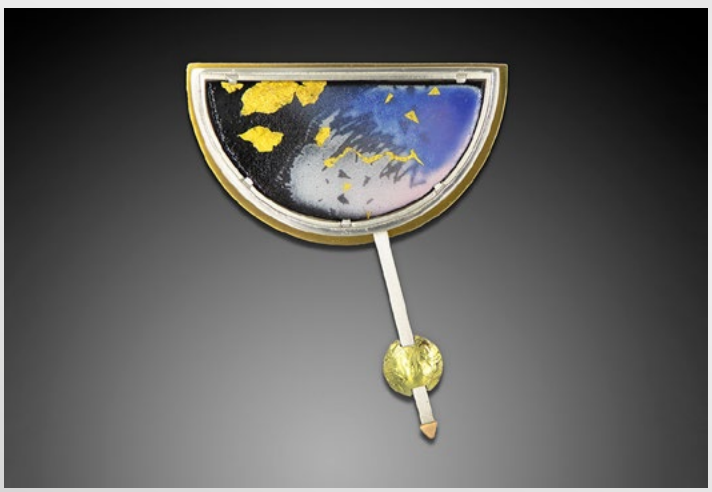

BARBARA MCFADYEN
barbaramcfadyen.com

VICTORIA LANSFORD
victorialansford.com

BARRY WECHSLER
ultrawave-art-metal.com

JUDY WUKITSCH
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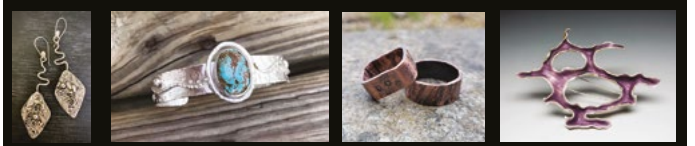

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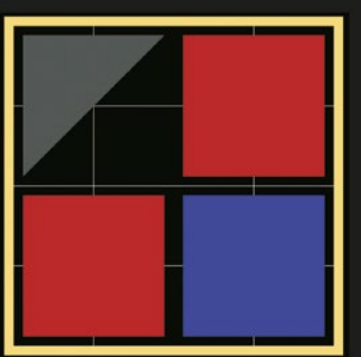

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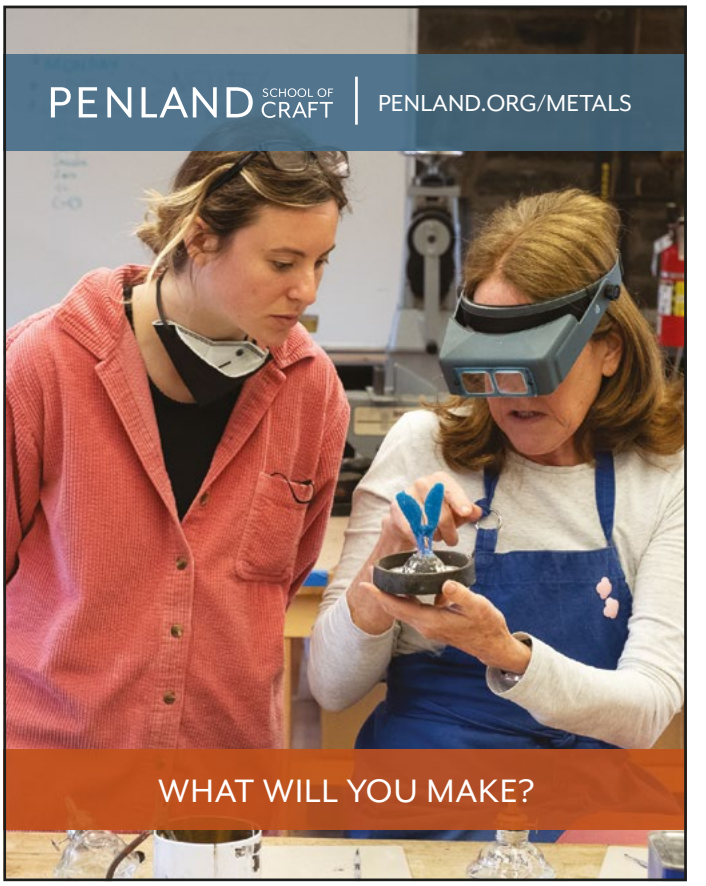

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